San Pasqual

A Tale of Old Pasadena

BY

CHARLOTTE HERR

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SAN PASQUAL
A TALE OF OLD PASADENA

BY
CHARLOTTE HERR

WITH PREFACE BY
JOHN STEVEN McGROARTY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRANCES CREEDON

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Pasadena

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TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER

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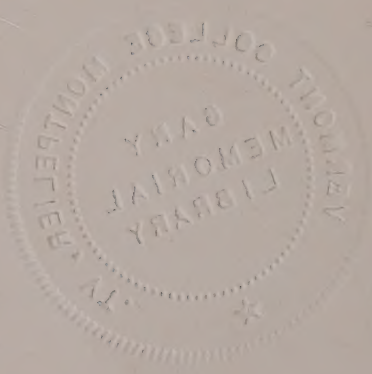
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FOREWORD

WE HAVE now come to a time in California when we can look back upon days it once knew and that, in passing, took away with them forever a manner of life that was as sweet as it was glamorous.

Like the Greece of Pericles, California had a golden age. Not the age of gold that came with the great adventure of the "Days of '49," but that golden age of happiness and vivid color that lived with the sons and daughters of Spain and their descendants who brought to California and maintained upon its shining hills and flower-flamed vales the high culture and exquisite courtesies of their race.

Upon and about the great rancho of San Pasqual, which is now the modern bustling City of Pasadena celebrating this year its fiftieth anniversary, much of this high romance centered.

Catching in her deft and sympathetic heart the dreams of those old times, sensing unerringly the spirit of them, Miss Herr has pictured them most faithfully in this little book. Aiming only to meet a local emergency

she has really achieved a universal need; for it is true that life in this complex and scurrying age has sore need of beauty.

I commend this story of old Pasqual to all who love romance. And I commend it also to all who desire truth. The book has all this, and more. It is all the very soul of romance, yet a great deal of it is true. In the first place, many of the names used in the narrative are real names, used with the full consent of the families concerned. The "Perez place" around which actually took place one of the battles which gave California to the United States, a battle fought in much the same fashion as it is described within these pages, stands yet in the grounds of the Raymond Hotel and is still used, bearing now the name of the Adobe Flores Teahouse. The hacienda, Casa San Pasqual, was still standing in 1885 on the banks of the Arroyo near where Lincoln Park is now located. It is true, also, that El Molino, the old mill almost opposite the Huntington Hotel and now merely a picturesque ruin, was during the eighties, sufficiently renovated and changed to become the winter home of Colonel and Mrs. Kewen as related by the author.

We are now far enough away from it to look back clearly on California's beautiful

past, and we are fortunate that we have writers of Miss Herr's insight and skill to picture that past for us accurately and lovingly.

JOHN STEVEN MCGROARTY

Mission San Gabriel
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San Pasqual
A Tale of Old Pasadena

Part I

THE young Senora came slowly up the path from the corral and paused at the garden gate. It was a full half hour since she had bid farewell to her husband, Don Juan Bandini, and watched him gallop out of sight along the southern road leading to Rancho Laguna by way of the beach. She herself had fastened the buckles of his sword-belt with fingers that trembled only when he stooped to kiss them. She had even forced herself to smile courageously when he confessed that, in spite of the almost certain danger, it might be necessary for him to ride on beyond the rancho into that center of the storm, Los Angeles itself.

But all such tender pride and sympathy had vanished when, on the threshold of departure, Don Juan made another confession. What he told her last of all left her stunned as with a blow, from which she had at length rallied to incredulous surprise and anger.

"But you must be reasonable, Refugio, mia," he had pleaded, curbing easily with one practised hand the fiery El Capitan, who wheeled and strained at his bit, impatient to be gone, while the master smiled anxiously down into the dark eyes of his wife. Wonderful eyes they were, whose shadowy depths within the same instant could gleam with fury and soften again to tenderness.

"It is not, my dearest one, that I would betray my country. God in Heaven! Thou knowest I love our California even as dost thou thyself! It is only—"

"But that thou canst not, Juan," she had interrupted bitterly, "and help it fall the prey of the Americans. Such is not the way General Castro means to save it. Ah, there is a man who will gladly die to prove his loyalty, while thou—Madre de Dios!" throwing out her hands in a desolate gesture of despair—"it is impossible that thou—my husband—the father of my children, can desert your home—give San Pasqual—" She laid her head against the saddle cloth and wept while Don Juan bent his troubled gaze upon her. Poor little woman! How was he to make her understand?

Gently stroking the soft black braids wound round and round her head, he tried again.

"It is not that—not that at all! Will you not try to see it, sweetheart? General Castro is goodness itself. We all have known that for years and love him for it;—but he is a visionary—it is too late. No more than he do I wish for the Americanos. But they are here. The change has come. We cannot longer hold the land—" he waved his quirto toward the circle of sun-browned hills beyond the Arroyo—"cannot save it in that way, no matter how we fight. They are too many—too strong for us. Was not that the very reason Don Manuel Garfias gave San Pasqual to me and himself returned to Mexico? He knew how hopeless it was to struggle longer. God of my soul—that I might make you see it before I go! Our only chance to save even the rancho lies in making friends at Washington."

"Gringoes—peddlers! who want only the horses off our ranges—the gold in our rivers! What care they for us? Nor did Don Garfias leave you San Pasqual merely to hand it over to them—no, never—never!"

"Yet," answered her husband, wearily, "at least we shall have peace, and that is more than

Mexico in twenty years has given us. Well knowest thou that thyself, Refugio. We will argue it no longer—I must be on my way—but remember thou this, my beloved one," and bending from the saddle he caught her up beside him and pressed her lips to his. "Let come what will, 'tis only thee and the little ones I love, and whatever I do is done for thee and for them."

Then hastily, as if distrusting himself to speak further, he had swung her again to the ground and without another word struck spurs into his horse and galloped off.

That was almost an hour ago now and still, dazed and unconvinced, she lingered where he had left her. How the fates could have brought it about that her husband, a son of one of the wealthiest and most distinguished among the aristocratic old Spanish families gathered in the new world, the owner of vast ranchos not only in both the Californias, but in Mexico as well, and, even while he spoke the hateful words, a member of the council in Los Angeles—how he could acknowledge himself a traitor—it was beyond belief! But, as for herself—proudly the Senora drew herself erect, the beautiful eyes ablaze—it should

make no difference whatever he said or did. She who had been born an Arguello—yes, thank God—could be even as determined as he. Come what might, then, no one had ever heard of an Arguello disloyal—no, nor ever should!

Many a small duty, such as only the Senora herself might perform, awaited her within the long, low hacienda which crowned the slope beyond the garden. Yet she lingered idly, her eyes still on the distant road that lay in the golden September sunshine like a narrow white ribbon flung across the hills, her hand playing listlessly with the latch of the gate which, fashioned like a door within the arch and higher than was she herself, framed her dark beauty against a background of softest torquoise.

And beautiful indeed she was, the Senora Bandini, nor had borne for long so dignified a title. Well could she remember, scarce six short years since, when the handsome young Don Juan Bandini had first come to California, a dashing lieutenant on Gen. Micheltorena's staff. For a few months the newly arrived forces from Mexico had tarried at San Diego, entertained lavishly by the Lugos and

other great families of that neighborhood. But before the winter was fairly begun, the general moved on to Los Angeles, whereupon had followed a round of feasting and dancing, with bull-fights and bear-baitings such as even that frivolous city of the south but seldom witnessed. Her mother's home, the Casa Arguello, became at once the social if not the official headquarters for all the young Mexican officers, and here it was that Don Juan had fallen desperately in love with the daughter of the house—the Senorita Refugio, acknowledged by every caballero from San Diego to Monterey the loveliest woman in Upper California. Passionate but brief had been his wooing, for when the acacias, tossing aloft their fluffy gold, proclaimed that spring had come again, a wedding took place in the old adobe church across the plaza, the most elaborate it had ever witnessed.

And more than this the young wife could recall. After the wedding breakfast at her mother's almost the entire assemblage had departed with them on the bridal tour. Along El Camino Real had swept the gay cavalcade, a glittering triumphal procession to which the caballeros in crimson embroidered jackets and

velvet breeches laced with gold, their sombreros heavily decked with silver, lent fully as much color as did the senoritas, mounted demurely in sweeping skirts that almost touched the ground, yet sitting their horses with that same swaying grace with which a boat rides the waves. At every rancho and mission station where they halted to pass the night, new feasts and dances had been prepared, the whole country-side rejoicing to play a part, however small, in their brilliant progress to Monterey. And when, at the end of a week, they reached the capitol, the governor himself had given a ball in their honor, and on the morning following had accompanied them in person across the pine-covered hills to seek a second blessing at the famous Mission de Carmelo.

And all the happy years that followed passed in shadowy review before her when—the festivities ended at last—she had ridden at her husband's side from Los Angeles out to her new home, the hacienda at San Pasqual. Built of adobe with walls thick enough to withstand a siege, but lined with the finest of redwood brought down at immense expense from the mountains for the purpose, the house had

been the talk of the province when Don Manuel Garfias presented it as one of his wedding gifts to his own bride. But that was as nothing to the gossip which buzzed in all circles when it, together with the entire rancho, was suddenly deeded over to Senor Bandini on the eve of his marriage. Not even Refugio until today had thoroughly understood that transfer. A most amazing wedding gift truly from any man to another, no matter how favored the donor in the matter of lands and herds, for not only was the house the finest of its kind at the time, but the rancho on which it stood covered more than two square leagues —over forty thousand acres, and bore, besides, the blessing of the Church because, long years before, it had been mission land. Many a time, for hours together had husband and wife galloped side by side, even down to their own strip of beach on the blue Pacific, yet never set foot off this their princely domain.

Six happy years indeed had they been,—and the garden had rung with the laughter of children, two boys and the daintiest of daughters, and little Felipe the youngest,—a baby still, but sturdy and brave and destined, her mother's heart whispered, to be the finest of all. Even

now as she loitered, loath for the first time to enter her home, she could hear them playing in the patio and teasing old Torna, their Indian nurse, who bore it, as always, with the stolid patience of her race, loving them, none the less, for their mother's sake as though they had been her own. Tears sparkled on the Senora's dark lashes while she listened, but her lips were still the straight set line they had been when her husband left her.

Other sounds drifted to her,—the usual morning tumult indicating that the routine tasks of the day at Casa San Pasqual were already well under way. Indian girls, kneeling beside sunken tubs of stone near the spring on the Arroyo edge, laughed and gossiped together as they rinsed little shirts and smocks, working apparently with heedless haste, yet careful none the less not to tear the fine Mexican drawn work; for the Senora, despite her youth and beauty, had already proved herself a strict and critical mistress. From the corral farther away came the shouts of vacqueros busily rubbing down the saddle horses, and beyond the Arroyo on the northern uplands she could just make out a distant flock drifting like gray haze beneath the mountains.

Then all at once the Senora dropped the latch and leaned forward, watching with startled intentness those moving specks. A moment, and she turned with sudden decision and pushed the gate wide open.

"Francesco!" she called sharply to an old Indian busy, just inside, with spade and hoe among the roses, "Go tell Louis Vicente I would speak with him at once. He will find me in the farther patio. Go quickly as thou canst, Francesco!"

And the ancient gardener, scenting trouble with Indian acuteness, hobbled off at the best speed his years, together with much rheumatism, had left him.

In spite of all his haste, however, Refugio, pacing with nervous impatience the little flower-lined court reserved to her alone, had time to let astonishment and incredulity harden into unreasoning resentment against the man she loved before explanation in any shape appeared. Absently, with eyes blind to the beauty about them, her glance strayed from violet-bordered walks to the galleries where misty white wisteria clung. This peaceful inner garden looking out over the purple hills had been until today the very center of her

home. Here had she sat for hours at a time with her children about her, setting dainty stitches in tiny garments, or drawing threads in linen brought all the way from Spain to make a new altar-cloth for the dear old Mission church at San Gabriel. Doubly beautiful in her peace and pride and happiness, she had swung the low hammock gently to and fro, humming for a baby's nap some plaintive Spanish love song, an echo from the serenades of her own girlhood. But all that was as nothing now. One thing only she saw today,—the face of her husband as he uttered the words that would forever brand him in her eyes a traitor.

So it was that when at length Louis Vicente, the Mexican who acted as Don Juan's major domo, stood before her, he wondered much to find, in place of the smiling young Senora he usually beheld, a woman with flushed cheeks, her eyes bright with anger, who walked restlessly back and forth while she talked.

"What is this I see, Louis?" she demanded. "Were not Governor Pico's orders strict that all the stock on every rancho, whether cattle or sheep, and the horses as well, should be driven for safety to the mountains? His messenger

came two full days ago, and our vacqueros left yesterday at dawn. How comes it then that Jose's band is still in sight?—aye, and moving this way toward the range?"

His eyes down cast, the major domo shuffled uneasily but remained silent.

"Speak thou!" she commanded harshly, "or, by Our Lady herself I swear thou shalt taste of the riata—and speedily. This is no time for dilly-dallying."

Thus threatened, the man flung back his head, sullenly meeting her angry glance.

"The Senora forgets herself," he reminded her haughtily. "The Indians,—yes. The Mexicans too, maybe, if they are servants and grow lazy or shirk. But the whip for Senor Bandini's major domo,—no one ever yet hear of so great insult as that!"

"Yet you heard of it but one short moment ago,—the riata! Yes,—and if you drive me to it,—the raw-hide. Well enough you know to heed my orders in Senor Bandini's absence. Once again I ask you,—why is not Jose's flock gone?"

"The master himself,—he say I am to tell no one," Louis insisted.

The eyes of the Senora flashed.

"And how many times must he also say to thee that I am mistress of San Pasqual and my word law as well as his? My patience goes, thou block of stubbornness. Unless you answer instantly, you shall be tied hand and foot and whipped till you fall,—aye, and no longer either shall you be major domo here."

The man shrugged, yielding helplessly. Of what use to dispute an angry woman? He bowed low before her, sweeping the ground with his sombrero.

"I obey, Senora, but you will explain, I entreat you, to el patron when he returns how it comes I break my word to him?"

"I will explain!"

"It is this way, then. Senor Bandini, he is much worried for this long time about the rancho. I see that,—all the vacqueros they see it too. But only I know el patron makes the decision to stand for the Americanos. That he tell to me alone two,—three months ago. Well then, day before yesterday he gives me the order to move the stock like as Governor Pico say. It is all to go to the canyon behind rancho Los Robles. Then, when all are started, he call me quiet-like to one side, and he say Colonel Stockton's army must have saddle

horses, and beef cattle and sheep for meat. If not,—and before two—three days maybe,—then Major Fremont he cannot take Los Angeles."

"You mean—?" But the Senora could not go on.

Louis nodded understandingly.

"It is the only way, he say. The Americano's army must be fed or all is lost. He say it just so."

"But why—why all this to you,—a mere servant, and not one word to me, his wife!"

In her effort to make real the unbelievable change which had swept without warning into her life, the Senora had, for the moment, in truth forgotten herself. The major domo was not a servant. Yet so dazed with bewilderment were the beautiful eyes she lifted to him that Vicente who, though crude, was neither a cruel nor unsympathetic man at heart, while smarting anew at this last uncalled for insult, felt for her only pity.

"El patron explain that too," he answered gently. "It is to spare you pain he does not wish you to know as long as it is possible. It is because you are so attach to California, he

say. You love so dearly that you don't,—you cannot—"

"Cannot play the traitor!" In such tones as he had never before heard from her, his mistress took the words from his lips. "No, there he is right. That particular brand of cowardice he alone possesses!" Proudly she drew herself to her full height, her eyes ablaze with scorn. "And the horses,—the beef-cattle that are to help those Gringos destroy our country,—how many?"

"Five hundred horses," reluctantly answered the major domo, "and a thousand cattle."

"To Laguna they drive them?"

The man shook his head.

"No, they will wait here, Senora. Tomorrow Senor Bandini returns to San Pasqual. He will bring Colonel Stockton with him and all will be turned over to him here."

Then, for an instant, he thought his mistress had fainted and caught at her swaying figure. But she pushed him from her and once again drew herself rigidly erect.

"Never!" The tone in itself was a decree. "Never shall an American officer set foot in Casa San Pasqual. No matter what your master plans, this is my children's home and

it shall not be defiled. Don Juan is false,—or else gone mad. But mad or a traitor, he is gone. Very well then, Louis Vicente. You have obeyed his orders,—good! It was your duty. But from this moment on they are mine alone you take. Send word instantly to the vacqueros that they turn the horses again toward the mountains,—aye, and those thousand cattle and the sheep. It may be some day my little Felipe he need those animals. Go!"

The man turned promptly, but before he could cross the patio she had bethought her of other details and called him back.

"When you have seen to that, Louis," she told him, meeting his eyes now with a glance quite level and cool,—"Go call in all the other men,—the Indians too. They are to bring muskets and their pistols and help me guard the house. No American shall enter here tomorrow nor any other day,—not Don Juan himself unless he comes back sane! But about that I shall send him a letter. I go to write it now, and in one-half hour I desire Joaquin to come here with his swiftest horse. He shall carry it to Laguna. Find him and tell him so."

And finally, having done everything she could think of to further the cause of the Cali-

fornia she loved against the United States which she despised, Dona Refugio spent the long remaining hours of that hardest day of her life prostrate before the Virgin in the little private chapel by the gate. She had lighted the two tall candles standing always in niches on either side the wooden statue and, because of the supreme importance of the prayers to be offered on the present occasion, had placed a third,—small, white, fragrant, and burning within a holder of pure gold, on the highest of the steps leading to the shrine. Draped in gaudy robes made rich with embroideries wrought in native abalone pearls, the figure behind the flickering shadows stared with blank, expressionless eyes at the misery of the living woman at its feet. But of Our Lady's apparent indifference, the Senora took no heed. Petition after petition she poured forth, slipping, one by one, with stifled sobs, the golden beads of her rosary,—petitions chaotic and contradictory which only heaven itself might understand,—that the husband who, in spite of this sudden waywardness beyond her power to comprehend, was still dearer to her than all else, might fail in what he sought to do, yet return in safety home again;—that she

might be granted by the blessed Virgin strength to work against him, yet never risk the loss of his love,—until, worn out at last by such contrary and conflicting emotions, she fell into a troubled slumber.

Old Torna, stealing in at twilight to call her to the evening meal, found her so, the heavy black lashes pressed close against her cheek; but fearing, nevertheless, to disturb what might be devotion, hastily crossed herself and limped disconsolately away to explain as best she could their mother's absence to the wondering children.

And thus it came about that the Senora heard nothing of hurrying hoof-beats, nor knew of the rider who an hour or so later, galloped past the chapel and on under the big pepper trees where stood the major domo's cabin. Sliding from his panting mustang, he had knocked peremptorily upon the door with the handle of his quirto until Vicente appeared. A brief ten minutes the two men spent in conference as the result of which the major domo once more appeared, this time unsummoned, before his mistress. He, in his turn, finding her lying with closed eyes before the image of

the Virgin, although he bore tidings which could not wait, yet hesitated to speak.

For an instant he stood irresolute, gazing uneasily down at the small figure, at the soft black of disordered braids, the flushed cheeks, the tear-stains beneath the long dark lashes. But while he hesitated, the Senora, as if conscious of a presence near her, slowly opened her eyes, regarding him wearily but without surprise.

"Yes?—What it it, Louis?" she asked.

"Your pardon, Senora,—a thousand pardons,—but a messenger,—a caballero, has come—"

Instantly she was on her feet alert, defiant.

"He brings word from the American camp. It—it concerns the master."

The eyes of Dona Refugio flashed.

"The master! You should have called me instantly."

Vicente made a deep obeisance.

"At your service, Senora, but it is upon the instant I come, and even while I speak the man is waiting outside your pleasure to speak with you."

"Let him come in then, at once." But Californian hospitality asserting itself under even

such adverse conditions,—"After I have heard what he has to tell me," she continued, "see thou to it, Louis, that he has some refreshment and a room for the night."

The stranger was a tall man, slender yet wiry of build, and in spite of the evident haste with which he had traveled, was dressed with the elaborate care of the most leisurely of caballeros in velvet breeches and short, gold-braided jacket. His serape was deeply fringed, and the sombrero with which he touched the floor in his salute to the lady of the rancho, was heavy with silver trimmings.

Refugio eyed him coldly.

"You bring me word from Senor Bandini?"

"Rather from Colonel Stockton, Senora," he answered, speaking in Spanish but with an energy so different from the habitual drawl of the Californians as to bring a gleam of suspicion to her eyes. "God knows how much I wish it were pleasanter news."

He paused, glancing with sympathy he took no pains to conceal at the evident signs of her grief. The Senora made a gesture of impatience.

"Say quickly what you have come to say," she commanded. "If I am in trouble, all

blame for it lies with the accursed Americans and delay will not help."

"You never spoke truer words, Senora, and, at any rate, the news I bring admits of no delay. There has been a battle,—a mere skirmish, but—"

Refugio, shrinking back against the altar, covered her eyes with her hands.

"A battle say'st thou? At Laguna?"

"No, they did not reach Laguna. Only about three miles from here near the Perez adobe,—if you know the place. Soon after the noon hour today. Senor Bandini had just barely got there when he was hurt, but—he had your letter."

With the news that her husband was wounded Refugio's face had gone white, but at the mention of the letter she caught her breath in horror.

"My letter! But how,—how could he? How know you he had the letter?" she demanded fiercely.

"How he received it I cannot tell you, Senora, but Don Juan himself sent word that without fail you were to know that he had read your letter."

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Dona Refugio closed her eyes, swaying against the altar rail. She was white now to the lips. But before the stranger, springing forward, could reach her, she had rallied her strength and faced him sternly.

"Go on," she commanded. "I have not yet the whole of your message. He is hurt,—and what more?"

The man shrugged stoically.

"Only that your husband should be taken at once by Capt. Wilson to General Fremont's surgeon at headquarters. He serves on the General's staff and his equipment is there in Los Angeles. If Senor Bandini can be taken soon enough,—in the morning at the latest, very good then,—he will probably recover. Major Stockton bid me tell you he will do his best to get him there in time, and—" drawing a a paper from his breast, "He also sends you this pass through the American lines so that you may come to nurse him at headquarters. The Americans hold the road through Las Feliz rancho. You can easily get through that way. But—" his tone changed slightly, "The Colonel also says you must know that if they cannot manage it,—and there is a difficulty,—

then—then there is not much hope. One thing more—"

He would have hurried on, urged by the suffering in her eyes, to end his task as speedily as might be, but with upraised hand she stopped him.

"Wait! you say there is a difficulty to take my husband to Los Angeles. What difficulty?"

The messenger hesitated.

"Yes,—unfortunately there is,—a strange one, Senora. You may not understand, but we—the Colonel lacks an American flag."

"A *flag!*" In spite of himself he smiled at her tone. It might have been a rattle-snake of which she spoke.

"You wonder, no doubt, Senora, what such a want can possibly have to do with getting Senor Bandini to Los Angeles,—but it is really very important. You see," he continued, "This whole thing was entirely unexpected,—unprepared for. Col. Stockton was on his way to take the powder they know is stored at Laguna ranch. He had only a few men with him and carried no colors, hoping to pass unrecognized and so surprise them. But many Californians who favor American rule joined him on the way,—your husband was one of them." He

felt rather than saw the Senora flinch, but she kept her eyes unwaveringly upon him. "Then just as they were about to pass the Perez place, out from their ambush behind it rushed a whole regiment, it seemed, of the enemy, and for an hour or so all the surprise was the other way round!" He chuckled grimly at the recollection.

"For an hour or so,—you mean?" She leaned forward breathless.

"Oh in the end, of course, they were whipped to a finish, but not before several of the Americans had been killed and Senor Bandini seriously hurt. And now the deuce of the matter is that because of an agreement between Fremont and the Alcalde, Col. Stockton has orders not to re-enter Los Angeles without displaying the American flag. Of course he can send for one,—has already done so,—but it happens that the Californians fell back in that direction. They guard every road except the one I told you of, and no one can reach that from Perez's. God knows how long it may be before they get one through,—and as I told you, delay is dangerous."

With clasped hands, her voice harsh with agony, the Senora fell on her knees before him.

"Let them bring him home," she pleaded. "It is nearer by miles. Go back at once,—Vicente will give you wine and a fresh horse,—and tell that Colonel of Americanos I command him instantly to send my husband home. This Capt. Wilson,—we know him,—a friend to Senor Eaton who lives near us here. Their surgeon shall come here to tend him. I shall send for him at once!"

The man shook his head.

"You do not understand, Senora. The surgeon is a member of General Fremont's staff. He could not possibly leave headquarters to come here. And even if he could it would not help. Senor Bandini himself has refused to return to San Pasqual, and besides is in a fever now,—delirious, and knows no one. He lies there moaning, talking always of your letter. But truly, Senora," he added hastily, "Do not be too alarmed! We shall do all we can."

For Refugio was gazing up at him blindly as one doubting that she heard aright. Then, as the full meaning of his words dawned upon her, in complete despair she threw herself sobbing at the Virgin's feet. For a moment the stranger gazed pityingly down at her. Then, as

if realizing his helplessness to aid in such a crisis, he stole softly from the chapel.

Meanwhile the major domo had seen to the care of the messenger's horse and in doing so had made a discovery which went far toward banishing from his mind every thought except one of triumphant excitement. A discovery it was to be shared with his own kind at once, and therefore, having served the stranger with meat and wine, and conducted him to one of the cell-like guest-chambers opening on the larger patio, Louis continued in haste along the corridor to the kitchen where he could hear the voices of servants still loitering over their evening work. And having gained, from the moment of his entrance, an eager audience, he avenged himself, in part at least, for his humiliation of the morning by relating to such of them as were, like himself, of Mexican birth a description of the newcomer together with some information he intended to withhold from his mistress.

"Our Senora, she think herself like a man to understand all things," he explained to the gaping circle of maids and vacqueros, "and for a woman" he continued condescendingly, "it is true she is uncommon smart. But most

surely is she fooled tonight. That man in there," with a jerk of his thumb toward the guest-room, "he is no caballero, for all he come in velvet breeches and fringe on his serape and peaked sombrero. That is all one blind and no use either, for the Senora did not notice them, —no, nor,—you may take my word for it,— ever will know velvet from calico again until el patron comes riding home a well man once more. But it is different with me! I have seen this man before. It is I who sell to him that horse he rides,—one of San Pasqual's best he is too,—the finest we ever raised. He does not remember that,—does not know me at all, —but just the same, velvet serape and peaked sombrero no good with me either. The Senora she say she never let one American officer set foot in Casa San Pasqual." He laughed. "Very good,—maybe not. But not so with those same officers' spies! That man she invite to sleep under her roof tonight,—he is General Fremont's very best scout,—Kit Carson!"

But the woman whose powers of penetration Vicente thus measured so lightly had not been quite so unobserving as he supposed, nor had this second blow, tragic and unexpected as it was, left her altogether in despair.

Scarcely had the sound of the messenger's footsteps died away when she too arose and left the chapel. Stealing noiselessly under the pepper trees and along the shadowy corridor, she lifted with infinite precaution the latch of her own door, closing it as carefully behind her. But there was no hesitancy nor lack of precision in her movements. She knew exactly what she intended to do and set immediately about it.

The room she entered looked at first sight cold and bare to the point of austerity. The floor of brick was relieved only by braided rag rugs. On the adobe wall above the narrow iron bedstead hung a large unframed canvas showing St. Peter kneeling in worship to the Virgin. The painting was in oils, but so cracked and dim with age as to be almost indiscernible. A straight chair in front of a small square dressing table, a wardrobe and a long cedar chest completed the furnishings. Except for the pier glass at the farther end and a quilt of yellow satin flung over the bed, it appeared rather the cell of a nun than the chamber of the mistress of the mansion, an impression strengthened by the small shrine in a corner above which hung the crucifix. Yet

every door was a solid panel of the choicest redwood, while the deep flounce of lace which edged the quilt was of the finest Spain could send.

Without a glance, however, except to note that it was empty, the Senora hastily crossed the room and knocked upon a door opposite the one by which she had entered. It opened instantly and the old Indian woman hobbled in.

"So thou hast come in at last, my beloved!" she cried throwing her arms about Refugio while the tears streamed down her withered cheeks. "I knew Our Blessed Lady would answer me. For these two hours have I been on my knees to her. Thou wilt go to bed now and rest?"

The Senora pushed her gently away.

"Hold thy foolishness, Torna," she answered impatiently. "I am not ill, nor have I time for sleep tonight. There is much to be done before it grows light again, and thou must help me."

Her words brought a gleam of curiosity into the dim eyes of the old servant. The beautiful face of her mistress was flushed, her eyes bright, her tones eager. Truly sleep was far from her, but what could have happened to

cause such excitement was more than Torna could fathom.

"Make haste and light a lamp," continued Refugio hurriedly. "Kindle a fire, too, here in my room. It is cold." And in truth she was shaking from head to foot, but whether from cold or excitement it would have been hard to determine. "Then bring to me a thimble and needles and scissors and the same for thyself. Within the next hour we must make a flag—a flag for the Gringos. Hurry!" And leaving the old woman quite dazed now and uncertain as to her mistress's sanity, she turned abruptly away and flung open the door of the wardrobe.

With feverish haste she dragged out one gown after another only to shake her head and toss them impatiently back again. For a moment or two she seemed completely at a loss. Then new light dawned, and leaving the bright satin she had just discarded in a heap on the floor she hurried into the room beyond. It was the nursery and in spite of her anxiety and haste she paused instinctively, her finger on her lips, upon the threshold.

Five tumbled heads lay peacefully upon as many narrow pillows placed on cots standing in a row beneath the open windows.

Small garments, ready for the morning, hung where they had been carefully folded and placed by the painstaking old nurse.

Refugio crossed to the crib which held little Felipe and bending over the rosy baby face kissed his soft lips. Then, one by one, she examined the clothes laid over the back of his own particular little red chair. From among them she took a coat of dark blue serge, then ran hurriedly through the pile again, searching for the little serape of crimson velvet, —the first he had ever possessed,—most precious among the birthday gifts of one short week ago. To Felipe it was the badge of dawning manhood and, so far as Refugio could recall, he had never once since its bestowal allowed it out of his sight. But what had become of it now? Following hard on her puzzled frown, however, came the instinctive understanding of the mother. Ah, she knew! With a tremulous smile she folded back the covers—and laughed aloud. For there, clasped tightly in his arms and doubly guarded by the unblinking eyes of the canton-flannel dog who always accompanied Felipe to bed, lay the serape!

Refugio hesitated, all her mother's heart in revolt against what she meant to do.

"Poor baby!" she breathed, pressing her lips once more against his warm cheek. "What a shame to take it from him. He will miss it so,—and cry."

But the vision of her husband lying wounded and helpless among the hated Americans rose again before her, and all lesser woes were blotted out. Gently but resolutely she drew the crimson scarf from his arms and laid it with the coat.

A petticoat of white satin, contributed with equal unsonsciousness by her older daughter, completed the materials out of which,—after several hours' breathless stitching of pointed white pieces against as large a square as could be cut from her son's jacket, while Torna frantically basted together long strips of red and white torn from the serape and what remained of the petticoat,—there emerged at length what was probably the most hastily assembled collection of stars and stripes that ever boasted itself an American flag. So numerous and obvious, in truth, were its imperfections, that the Senora, bestowing upon it a final feverish but critical survey, felt serious misgivings as to whether any one besides herself would ever recognize it as an emblem of the United States.

It was too late now, however, to improve it, and she proceeded stoically to carry out the remainder of her plan.

Shaking the combs from her hair, she rewove the long braids and tossed them over her shoulders. It was always more comfortable to ride with them so and for tonight's hard gallop everything must be made as easy as possible. Then wrapping herself in a long gray reboso, she thrust the flag beneath its folds, and was ready. The next problem was to circumvent Torna who, past experiences had taught her, would probably do everything within her power to keep her mistress from leaving the hacienda a second time. And on the present occasion the event more than justified her fears for, on reaching the main doorway, she found the old woman crouching like some faithful dog on the floor beside the threshold. Refugio had forcibly to push her aside in order to slide back the heavy bolts and make her escape. But once outside and deaf to the sobs and entreaties which followed her, she felt that the hardest portion of her task was over, and with a sense of relief almost joyous ran swiftly through the darkness to the corral. It took the merest whisper of her name

to bring Marquita, Refugio's own saddle mare, out of the group of other horses and to the fence, and only the work of a few seconds to lower the bars enough for her to step daintily across. But although joyously willing to accompany her mistress on any quest, no matter how strange the place or the time, and whinnying softly her pleasure at being called, Marquita, having gained her side stood regarding her so intently out of her shining eyes that, with a little sob, Refugio threw her arms about her neck, pulling the velvety nose down close against her cheek.

"Don't look at me like that, Marquita," she whispered. "Perhaps it is just wild and foolish, but my own precious Juan is hurt and what else can I do?"

She ran to the open shed opposite the corral, found in the dark the light English saddle she could lift by herself and, having scrambled onto the lower bars, flung it upon the horse and fastened it as best she could—a clumsy operation endured by Marquita with gentle amazement. The mounting, with the aid of the fence, was easier, and having drawn the folds of the reboso closely about her and made

sure that the flag was still tucked carefully out of sight, Refugio gathered up the reins.

"Now fly, Marquita, fly!" she whispered.

And as if welded by some magic in the words into one personality inspired by the same spirit and aim, out through the wide gates into the soft glitter of the night beyond they fled.

To the end of her life Refugio never forgot that ride. As if she had been without knowledge or warning transported to some distant country, the world lay strange about her. Hills, familiar and brown in the sun, stretched away beneath the stars, mysterious and forbidding. The silence, unbroken save for the occasional bark of a coyote, pressed in upon her like some living but sinister presence. Clinging to the companionship of her horse as to a person she talked to her incessantly.

"We aren't afraid, are we, Marquita? We're going to save Juan, and nothing in the world could stop us!"

But scarcely had the foolish boast left her lips when Refugio's heart leaped in her throat. A figure appeared suddenly out of the dark and stood directly in front of her, barring the path.

"Halt!"—and to the clatter of a musket, "Who goes there?"

Marquita shied so violently that had her rider been less than an expert horse-woman she must have been thrown. As it was, startled and terrified, she kept her seat with difficulty and found herself unable to make the slightest sound. Even though the cost be her life, she discovered, she could not answer the man.

"Who are you?" he demanded, and reached for the reins.

Then for pure relief Refugio could have shouted, for well did she know that voice! To no other did it belong than the Mexican rancher who every autumn brought down their winter supply of wine from Rancho Los Robles, where grew the finest Muscato grapes in all the country round.

"Alvardo!" she cried, stretching her hand for a friendly clasp. "Never was sight of you more welcome when you came with a whole carreta of wine!"

The man, dropping the reins, fell back in sheer amazement.

"Senora Bandini!" he gasped. "Out here and alone! But how?—why?"

"Yes, it is I—truly I, Alvardo, and not a ghost," answered Refugio with a touch of mischief, "although thou lookest as if thou had'st seen one. And you must not stop me nor hinder me one minute," she continued, gravely. "I seek Don Juan. He is wounded and will die unless I reach him tonight. I have no pass," she hurried on, hoping against hope that her husband's disaffection was still a secret, "but well know you that I would lay down my life for California!"

The man hesitated. Refugio could feel rather than see the wonder and distrust in his eyes. Then, after a moment of suspense which left her pale—

"Every one knows the loyalty of the Bandinis," he acknowledged, "but where is Don Juan, and,—even if I let you pass, how can you hope to find him in the night and alone? The hills are full of soldiers," he continued, doubtfully, "no one knows what might happen. A thousand pardons, Senora—it is for your own sake I ask it. Is there no safer way in which to help your husband? You run a frightful risk riding without escort along this trail tonight!"

The Senora, clutching more closely to her breast under the dark folds of her reboso the forlorn little emblem which would have betrayed her, drew herself rigidly erect.

"No Californian would annoy a Spanish lady," she answered proudly, "and I have careful directions just where to find the house where Senor Bandini lies. Pray to Our Lady, even as I do, for his life, Alvarado,—adios!" and with a light touch of the whip she sprang forward into the darkness and was gone.

THE long, low adobe, known throughout the vicinity as the Perez "place," which had been taken over by Colonel Stockton as temporary headquarters after the successful skirmish fought around its walls, was indeed perfectly familiar to Refugio. It stood on land owned by her husband and, with the one exception of El Molino, could justly claim to be the oldest building ever erected on San Pasqual territory. It dated back, in fact, to the days when the entire rancho had been a portion of

the mission lands belonging to San Gabriel. Although no one had lived there within her memory and it wore the forlorn, dispirited look common to empty houses, yet the place had always held an interest for her because of the romance of its origin.

Many years before, so the story ran, in the good old days when San Gabriel was the wealthiest as well as the most important of all the mission stations along the King's Highway, and that most famous of her rulers, Father Zalvidea was in power, a certain noble-hearted woman from Spain, one Eulalia Perez by name, had won his favor by her numerous works of love and mercy among the Indian converts. Many a dusky young mother had she aided with herb teas and even more effective advice when her little ones were ailing; while more than one rough soldier of the mission guard, ill from exposure and hardship, had been nursed back to health by her skill. Even to the stern old padre himself, of whom most of his associates stood in abject fear, she had ministered, bringing him safely through the crisis of a fever which otherwise, as no one knew better than he, had ushered him into another world before his work on earth was

finished. Thus had she made him for all time her sincere friend, and laid him under a greater obligation than he felt it within his power wholly to repay. Therefore when, partly because of enemies his severity had created, partly on account of his increasing age, the time came when his proud position was taken from him and given to another, Father Zalvidea in the midst of his own grief and humiliation did not forget Eulalia. She herself by this time was also well stricken in years, nor had her good deeds brought her reward in any worldly sense. The grateful love of all who dwelt in the mission village was hers, but love was all they had to give. And so, that the days of her approaching helplessness might not become those of neglect and suffering, on the morning of the last Easter he was to spend at San Gabriel, while its broad acres were still his to bestow, the padre had conferred upon her and her heirs forever, two and one-half square leagues of the choicest lands the mission possessed. Under the name of San Pasqual he gave it, in honor of the holy day on which the deed was signed. The grandsons of Eulalia had straightway built the adobe and stocked their new possessions with

the number of cattle and sheep required by California law, and so long as the Church had held her own, Eulalia's vast inheritance remained in the hands of her descendants. But the secularization of the missions wrought havoc with such ecclesiastical land titles, and Rancho San Pasqual, along with many others, had long ago been redeeded to new owners by the Mexican Government.

Dawn lay rosy upon the mountain tops when the Senora at length drew rein before the white-washed fence surrounding the house. No vestige of color showed in her own white cheeks. Yet her paleness was due not so much to fatigue as to the humiliation,—the most bitter she would ever experience—the necessity of relying on the protection afforded by an American flag for permission to seek her own husband's side. But during the lonely ride through the night she had been disciplining her pride to meet it, and knew that she was ready.

As she had expected, a sentry pacing back and forth before the doorway challenged her instantly, and as promptly she proceeded with what she had planned. Although the barrels of his musket were leveled squarely upon her

as she did so, without hesitation the Senora leaped boldly to the ground and shaking out the crude banner of his country before his bewildered eyes, fairly shoved it into his hand.

"Present it to Colonel Stockton with the compliments of Dona Refugio Bandini," she announced calmly," and tell him I will see my husband at once!"

THE papers which gave California to the United States were signed on Rancho San Pasqual, but not at the hacienda nor in the presence of the Senora. The sympathy, not only of her husband but of the American commanders as well, spared her the unnecessary suffering such a procedure would have involved. Nor did Don Juan himself knock softly at the door of the little chapel by the gate until the last man in the hated blue uniform had mounted his horse and disappeared beyond the hills. He found her where she had spent so many hours of those troubled days, kneeling before the altar. But at the

sound of his step on the brick floor, she rose at once and came to meet him, smiling bravely.

"It is all over, Juan?" she asked.

"They are gone," he answered gravely. Then taking her face between his hands he looked deep into her eyes where traces of tears still lingered.

"How did you ever bring yourself to do it, my own Refugio? It saved my life, yet I have never understood."

The eyes dropped until at last, throwing her arms about his neck, she hid them on his shoulder.

"Because," very quietly she told him, "because after I had thought it all over in the night, Juan, I found that you, my husband, were dearer to me than a dozen Californias!"

Part II

YEARS passed and much was as it had been with the Valley in old Mexican days, and many things were changed. Winter after winter, as in the years gone by, the mountains wrapped themselves in deeper purples behind mysterious mists, and crowned their heads with snow. Spring after spring flung the gold of the poppies over the sweeping mesas below. As brilliant still were these glowing patches as in the days now so long dead when the Spanish padres, beholding them for the first time and awestruck by their beauty, had reverently called them the glorious altar cloth of Holy Easter; and still, as of old, sailors, rounding the point at San Pedro, caught glimpses of a distant horizon gilded by the poppy-fields of Altadena.

Yet, in spite of the ringing call of the meadow-larks in the blue above and the fragrance of sage on the hills, in some subtle fashion the very atmosphere had changed. On the rolling uplands where the vacqueros of Don Juan Bandini, urging with cruel spurs their fierce

little mustangs, had tended his vast herds, and on many a slope where the autumn sun had warmed to amethyst the heavy amber-colored clusters of grapes for the mission, there stood now the rough board shacks of American settlers, each surrounded by its grove of struggling orange trees. For the Indiana Colony, in search of wealth or of health as the case might be, was trying out anew, and this time in accordance with thrifty American ideas, the old San Pasqual Rancho.

Not all of this pioneering had been easy—not all of it even free from terror. More than one timid woman of the Colony, listening at night with fast-beating heart to the barking of coyotes on the hills, or the savage cries of mountain lions quarreling over their respective water rights around some spring in the Arroyo not far from her own back door, had with all sincerity wished herself safely back again in Indianapolis; while, only a trifle less often, some city-bred man, discouraged on entering his grove on a morning following months of heavy, unaccustomed toil, to find that every tiny, much coaxed leaf on his baby trees had been eaten by grass-hoppers during the night, gave up in despair and went back to his office.

But to their credit it must also be said that most of the colonists had proved themselves of sterner stuff—of that pioneer breed, indeed, of whom it is so truly claimed that they furnish not only the brawn but the brain of mankind. By far the larger portion of them had bravely fought failure and loneliness and homesickness and had won out, so that now, as the tenth year of their experiment drew to a close, the little town of Pasadena, though as yet scarcely more than a village, had begun to lay aside some of the crudeness of its frontier days and to acquire with every season that passed more of the homelike appearance of a settled community.

It was true that its main thoroughfares, Colorado Street and Orange Grove Avenue, still remained no more than two dusty country roads crossing at right angles not far from the square, box-like wooden building containing the post office and general store and known throughout the country as "Barney Williams'." The diminutive Pasadena Presbyterian Church and the school house, even smaller and built of unfinished boards, still gazed apologetically at each other from the extreme southern end of the avenue where, after swerv-

ing obligingly around a gigantic live oak standing obstinately in its right-of-way, it turned and dwindled into a narrow lane called by some people California Street.

But this wholly temporary state of affairs was not to continue much longer. Rumors, indeed, were already afloat that that most public-spirited of citizens, the Hon. B. D. Wilson, who, having acquired from its former owner, as a slight token of gratitude for saving his life, a generous portion of San Pasqual and settled down there, had from the first watched with a fatherly interest the struggles of the infant community, was about to lend a helping hand in the higher education of its inhabitants. Five acres adjacent to Colorado Street were to be donated, it was said, for the building of a fine new school house two stories in height and capable of seating two hundred pupils at a time. For the present, however, the tiny church and the little board school house, nestling in the shadows of the giant oak, continued to be the most important, as they had been the first of Pasadena's public edifices.

And both of them, far from feeling apologetic, might well have been proud of the part they had played in the village life. The school

house in particular, by reason of its greater age, had from the day when the last nail was driven into place, carried more than its just share of the public burden. First of all it had sheltered the class immediately formed for the acquisition of more reading, and writing, and the intricacies of arithmetic. This class in the beginning had consisted of the two little daughters of Colonel Banbury only, who cantered merrily down on their ponies each morning from Fairmont, the Colonel's big place on the northern uplands, to be taught by sixteen-year-old Jennie Clapp. But the fame of the school spread steadily until it numbered fifty or more of the younger generation who, behind wide-spread geographies, feasted surreptitiously on ripe figs previously concealed in their desks, escaped at recess over the banks of the forbidden Arroyo, and otherwise proved that even the miraculous climate of Southern California could not improve upon nature sufficiently to change them noticeably for the better.

And while attending thus conscientiously to its special duties, the little school house had not scorned to make itself useful in other ways. Here the Young Men's Literary Society met,

as well as the Village Improvement Club. On stormy winter nights, too, when the rains came pouring as from buckets, and the swollen waters of the Arroyo thundered as they raced by, many a kettleful of candy had been pulled around the big sheet iron stove standing always in the exact middle of the room. But perhaps its most precious memory was that of a fragrant summer day when a band of youths and maidens had lined it with blossoms for a wedding.

Some of the burdens, however, were already slipping into the past and belonged to the days when the homes of the settlers were few and small and far between. Now all the way down the avenue, though set at some distance from the road among their groves and gardens, one caught glimpses of roomy two-story houses built according to the old-fashioned square type popular in the early eighties. Boxlike in shape and bare of all architectural detail except for the invariable bay window in the back parlor and, on the more pretentious, an occasional tower as uncompromisingly square as was the structure it adorned, yet not one of these old houses but bore about it an indefinable air of home and hospitality. Not one of

them, moreover, was without its verandas both in front and at the back. Nor was there a house without a rosevine, many of them cherished cuttings brought from the old home in the East which, intoxicated by their escape into perpetual summer, clambered in a riot of bloom to the very tops of the chimneys.

Much hard work was still necessary even on the part of such citizens as were thriftily becoming well-to-do, as the expression went. But comfort and pleasure were gradually assuming a more prominent place in the thought and life of the people. Behind each house was a shed fragrant with neatly piled logs of eucalyptus for open fires, and not far from the woodpile there stood usually a stable. For almost every head of a household now kept his carriage as well as horses of stouter build to do the heavy work about his place, and the ladies of the family, with sunshades held primly aloft, went to pay calls in their Victoria or in a surrey, according to their means, while on Sunday morning the row of buggies beside the hitching rail in front of the church was quite imposing.

An enterprising, god-fearing, and most neighborly little town was Pasadena in 1885,

and such being the case, and that the result of their own efforts, its inhabitants deserved to be and were, taking them one with another, as happy as people are usually permitted to be in this troublous world. In short, it might even be said quite truthfully that on a certain bright October morning of that year only one of them was anywhere near the verge of tears. Ida Ripley, however, after donating with icy sweetness and a reasonably good imitation of indifference a marble cake—her contribution to their picnic luncheon—had waved farewell to the Valley Hunt Club, assembled on some score or so of pinto ponies before her gate and with wet eyes turned back along the path to the house.

"I just can't go after all, Miss Martindale," she had explained smilingly. "The trustees have a meeting about the new desks this afternoon and I have to be there. I'm very sorry!"

She had, besides, other reasons of a much more personal nature for declining to be one of them that day, reasons even more thoroughly good and sufficient; yet no sooner was she hidden by friendly trees than her tears brimmed over. To give up the ride had been a bitter disappointment.

The Valley Hunt was the latest addition to the social facilities of the village—a recent importation from the East introduced by the one exotic family residing within its borders. Not yet had Pasadena been discovered by the tourist. Wealth in the exaggerated and sometimes grotesque forms which have so disillusioned the public of today did not exist in the earlier eighties, nor did those accounted wealthy by that simpler generation, and so able to indulge in such extravagance, hurry from place to place as do the restless rich of today. Every winter, to be sure, saw a scattering of Americans in Paris and along the Riviera—individuals forever afterwards set apart by their less favored fellow-citizens as those who had been "abroad." But to journey two thousand miles or more to California for no more serious a purpose than to escape an Eastern winter was as yet undreamed of. And so it had come about that when Simeon Martindale, a rich lumber merchant from Wisconsin, worth, so rumor whispered, almost one hundred thousand dollars, had followed up an alluring letter from a former partner by coming in person to investigate the wonders of the new land it described, his appearance, or perhaps more especially that

of his wife and daughter, had created quite a ripple in the hitherto placid currents of the village society.

Mr. Simeon Martindale, not so many years previous to his arrival, had known familiarly the feel of a pair of overalls and a flannel shirt. Even yet he was referred to at his mills as "old man Sim." But no hint of so plebeian a past had ever escaped the lips of either Mrs. Martindale or her daughter. For all intents and purposes, so far at least as Pasadena was concerned, they always had been and always would be to the manor born.

The family had installed themselves at the Hermosa Vista, the best as well as almost the only boarding-house in town,—and as yet the village boasted nothing in the form of a hotel —where they lived in a manner entirely new to Pasadena. Among other luxuries they had brought with them their own carriage, a roomy Victoria drawn by two high-stepping black horses. A colored man in livery drove this equipage and proud indeed was the matron before whose door it lingered while the two ladies paid a call. Except, however, for such unwonted extravagance they appeared well meaning and democratic enough and had en-

tered heartily into such small festivities as the town could offer. They had even accepted graciously, and entirely in the spirit in which it was offered, the most elaborate overture ever made by the village people—a calico ball given in their honor at the school house.

Shortly after this momentous event Miss Fanny Martindale, in her turn, had proposed the founding of a Hunt Club. She herself had spent the preceding autumn abroad and returned to her native land fascinated by old-world customs. To ride to hounds, she explained to the docile but somewhat dubious group of prospective members, was still popular in England, and if the citizens of Great Britain could carry on organizations of the sort, why could not Pasadena? That portion of Pasadena assembled, through their most courageous spokesman, a young professor by the name of Holder, politely agreed that no limits should be set to the ability of such a community as theirs to undertake and carry to a successful issue any project conceivable by the mind of man, the only objection to the one just presented being that the choice of chaseable material in the vicinity varied abruptly from grizzly bears to jack-rabbits. The ladies had

promptly announced their distaste for hunting the grizzly, while the gentlemen as frankly scorned the pursuit of rabbits. A compromise was brought about, however, on the basis of a further disclosure by Miss Fannie to the effect that in reality the club need not necessarily chase anything, its reason for existence and principal aim being to encourage a love for riding, an accomplishment already perfected through much unavoidable practise by almost every one concerned. The only innovations required, so their ringleader, her cheeks flushed with excitement, had declared, were red riding coats and a pack of hounds. On these accessories, however, she insisted—the club would be as nothing without them.

"Well," announced the obliging Mr. Holder after a silence during which somewhat lugubrious glances had been exchanged, "I don't believe we're the sort of folks to let one or two little difficulties like those stump us. Red coats oughtn't to cost any more than black ones so far as I can see, and I guess Filipe Bandini can lend us the dogs. His brother used to keep a pack, I know, to scare coyotes off his ranch."

Inspired by such daring and the enthusiasm of Miss Fanny, the club had been organized forthwith, and the all-day scampers accompanied by carriages bearing—together with the few members who did not ride—such a picnic luncheon as only Pasadena housewives could prepare, immediately inaugurated, soon became the chief social events of that winter.

With unnecessary haste, now that all cause for hurry was over, Ida retraced her steps along the path between the somewhat unkempt rows of orange trees. With one hand she led by his bridle her own pony, who followed amiably enough, not unwilling to return to the barn for a most unusual Saturday's rest. With the other she held, lest they trail upon the ground, the folds of her long riding skirt. Behind her at a respectful distance, his plumy tail drooping dejectedly, followed a beautiful collie. Once, as sounds of a scurrying departure reached them he paused, half inclined to go back, and barked eagerly; but the girl, her head held high in spite of her tears, recalled him sharply.

"Come on, Laddie! The very idea—going where you're not wanted!" And together they proceeded to the low brown house known

throughout the village as "the Doctor's." Most of the places in town bore names more or less high sounding, but the Ripley house, more unpretentious than its neighbors, had seemed to shrink from such distinction.

As the young girl, dropping the bridle, ran up the veranda steps, the slats of a shutter partially closed against the sun were pushed cautiously open and a voice exclaimed in surprise, "Why, Miss Ida! Did you forget somethin'?"

"No," she answered shortly. "I'm not going."

"But, Miss Ida, darlin'," persisted the voice, taking on a tone of distress although its owner still remained invisible within the cool darkness of the house. "What's the reason ye ain't going?"

"Because I don't care to!" But the words, though defiant, ended in a sound perilously near a sob. It was promptly suppressed yet evidently not before it had reached the ears of the unseen listener. Instantly, and as quietly as it had been opened, the shutter was closed again. Ida, flinging herself into the worn old hammock, heard the click of the fastening and smiled in spite of herself.

"Now it won't be two minutes before Hannah will have the whole story," she murmured to the dog who had followed,—still humiliated as to his tail,—and stood beside her trying to lay his head on her swaying lap.

"You'll see, Laddie!"

And even as she spoke a woman emerged from the shadowy doorway,—a woman well pasty forty, yet so round as to figure and so rosy of face as to deceive a casual observer into thinking her much younger. She was enveloped from head to foot in a checked gingham apron, and over her head she had tied a cloth of the same material so tightly that only here and there a tendril of auburn hair escaped to curl below its edges. Her honest blue eyes shining with sympathy, she rested her hands upon her hips and anxiously surveyed the girl.

"Now tell your old Hannah what's gone wrong, Miss Ida," she repeated, "You trapsin' back this way, before you've even got started, and Laddie barkin' fit to raise the dead!"

"He was only saying good-bye and wishing the Valley Hunt good luck," interrupted the girl bitterly. "Laddie never forgets his man-

ners, even if he isn't so aristocratic as some other people's dogs!"

Hannah frowned, still unconvinced.

"Sounded more as if he was chasin' 'em off the place, I should say! But what really is the trouble, darlin'?" she persisted. "Wasn't the cake all right?"

Ida laughed.

"The cake! That's all you ever think of, Hannah,—things to eat! But I guess this family would soon go to pieces if you didn't," she added in self reproach. "Somebody's got to. No, it wasn't the cake," with increasing bitterness, "it's Laddie they object to."

"Laddie!"

"Yes," she explained morosely. "He somehow had the misfortune to be born a collie instead of a hound, so he isn't eligible any longer to associate with the Valley Hunt. I don't see, though, how they can lay that up against him. It wasn't his fault!"

Curled by this time at his mistress's feet, the collie thumped an appreciation of her defense on the porch floor, his eyes fixed adoringly upon her.

"Umph!" sniffed Hannah who, because of the extra cooking often entailed by its ex-

cursions, cherished no great fondness for the organization in question. "An' it's me own opinion that if they don't have no more luck at startin' somethin' than they generally do, that Martindale girl's pug would be enough in the dog line to pack along. And if they should chance t' scare up a rabbit, a collie's better'n anything else on four legs when it comes to such varmints!"

"But, you see, they might start a fox." Ida smiled wickedly. "Fanny hasn't entirely given it up yet."

"Fox!" retorted Hannah with increasing derision. "It'll be many a long day, I'm a thinkin', before that crowd brings home a brush. Many's the time in the auld country I've seen it," she added reminiscently, "But 'twasn't no picnic-luncheon club that got 'em. They don't ride hard enough. Jack rabbits and rattlesnakes,—that's what they'll bring, or else nothin' at all but empty dishes,—you mark my words. But sure—" she scanned the young girl's face suspiciously, "Sure an' I can't believe they'd be so impolite as to throw it up to Laddie about being a collie to his very face. Isn't there something else?" she finished shrewdly.

Ida flushed guiltily and Hannah, her Irish curiosity now fully aroused, might have pushed her inquiries to the point of embarrassment, but that the dog himself came suddenly to the rescue. At sound of his name, as if scenting fresh sympathy in her voice, he leaped to his feet and began to circle about her, barking wildly. Her tone changed instantly.

"Sh-s-s-sh—there now! Down, Sir!" she commanded sharply. "Is it no feelin' at all ye have then, you selfish beast, an' the doctor still asleep? It's sure ashamed ye should be. Charge!"

"Isn't father up yet?" At mention of the name all irritation had vanished from Ida's face. She rose to her feet, a little anxious frown between her brows. "Isn't he feeling so well again this morning? He looked very tired last evening."

"He *was* tired,—just plain tuckered out. He can't seem to make it even to Barney Williams' any longer without bein' all used up when he comes in. An' I won't wake him up neither," added Hannah obstinately, "Not even for that Senora—that Dona what-ye-may-call-ums—nor nobody else—I won't!"

Ida's eyes opened wide, even as her cheeks flamed with sudden scarlet. "Senora Bandini?" she asked incredulously, "What do you mean, Hannah? The Senora isn't here?"

"Not now," returned the older woman indifferently. "She came just after you'd started. Said she wanted to see the Doctor, an' when I told her he wasn't up yet and couldn't see nobody, she said that was all right,—she'd come again."

"But Hannah," gasped the girl, "You shouldn't have treated the Senora like that!—so—so informally. Nobody does. You should have invited her in and offered her some lemonade or something after that long, hot ride. What *will* she think?"

But Hannah only smiled at such punctiliousness.

"Well, she didn't look like she was thinkin' much about lemonade, Miss Ida,—and anyhow I won't have the Doctor disturbed for any high caflutin Spanish manners that ever come over the water," she persisted, "Let 'em think what they will! Don't you worry,—she'll come back again!"

And with such meager satisfaction, though her pretty lips straightened ominously, Ida had

to be content; for in the household of the Ripleys Hannah's word was law and had been almost from the day when as an inexperienced bride the Doctor's wife herself had entered it. In that far away time Hannah had been but a slip of a girl only just come from old Ireland to try her fortunes in a new world. But bewildered and frightened by the strange language and customs beyond her comprehension, she had fled to the first refuge that offered itself,—the little new home in the outskirts of Boston. She had been with "her family" as she called them ever since and as year after year passed had become more and more a necessary part of the household. Had she not rejoiced with the young father and mother when little Ida came? Had she not wept with them when the two brothers were laid away in this old cemetery that overlooked the sea? The neighbors came to speak of her as the Ripleys' Hannah, and all the doctor's patients knew her as one who could not be bribed to tamper with his rest time. And when, after all Mrs. Ripley's anxious care of him, his strength at length gave way and a cough which had fastened itself upon him during a treacherous February thaw would not be

shaken off, it was Hannah who first proposed that they give up the old home in Boston and make a new one in California.

"I've been readin' about that far West," she had explained hopefully to her mistress, who, worried and bewildered by the new misfortune thrust so unexpectedly upon them, seemed at a loss which way to turn. "All plains-like, it seems,—full of cows with boys on horseback to chase 'em,—though why so much plungin' and racin' doesn't injure the milk is one thing I can't understand," she felt herself obliged in simple honesty to insert, her only knowledge of cattle having been derived from occasional rather heated discussions as to the quality of the family's cream during the daily visits of the milk man. But as she continued her description various other more alluring characteristics of the new region came to light,—the warmth of summer in the midst of winter and sunny slopes where orange trees blossomed all the year. In the end, as usual, she had her way with them until the Ripleys had cast in their lot with the newly organized Indiana Colony and found themselves pioneers with the rest on the sage-covered desert beneath the Sierras.

And there with the others they had struggled valiantly to found the new home but, because of the doctor's helplessness, with less success. For bravely and patiently as he had tried, the worn out man had never regained the strength given lavishly, so long as he was able, to his profession, and the brunt of the hardship had fallen on Ida's mother aided always by the faithful Hannah. Inspired by the emergency and her love for them, the untaught, impulsive Irish girl had developed a surprising perseverance and even much executive ability. It was she who had set out with her own hands the orange striplings, now grown into full-sized trees, with which they had planted their five-acre tract. It was Hannah who had cooked and mended and waited on the doctor after Mrs. Ripley discovered that she could no longer do any of the heavier work. And when, during the winter of the third year, the mother, broken in spirit by grief and homesickness and spent with the long struggle to make ends meet until their trees should come into bearing, gave up at last and was laid away in the little new burying ground on the edge of the desert, it was Hannah who, from that time on, took full charge of the household and its affairs.

"If it's bound to stay at home ye are, why then I s'pose ye will," she finished, moving again toward the door, for the day was yet young and many an unfinished task still waited within. "But it's sure sorry I am, for what with the school and your father sick as he is, you don't have any too much fun at best. What will ye do with all the long day, then?" She paused in the doorway to shoot her last bolt. "Somebody *else* is goin' to be mighty disappointed too,—judging by what I saw the last time he was over here!"

Again the scarlet flamed in the girl's cheek while, as if in resentment, she rose impatiently to her feet; but otherwise ignoring this last thrust, she answered the question which had preceded it with elaborate carelessness.

"What shall I do? Go over to the school house, I suppose, and correct arithmetic papers! There's always a deluge of them waiting. Sammy Wentworth's alone would keep me busy."

"If you happen to be goin' around by Barney Williams' you might get some chops for supper. The doctor can almost always eat a bit o' lamb."

Though suggested deferentially and in a tone implying that its fulfillment depended entirely upon her young mistress's pleasure, such a request from Hannah amounted to a command, and Ida, as a matter of course, accepted it as such.

"Yes, Hannah," she dutifully responded, "Is there anything else you want?"

"There's nothin' else needed as I know of. I did the Sunday marketin' yesterday while I was waiting for the blacksmith. But if that Wentworth boy waits on ye," her voice rose irritably, "Be sure you tell him to cut 'em straight. He'll know what you mean. Tell him I won't have any more lamb chops cut on the bias. I certainly do pity that family," she added feelingly, "Both those boys of theirs bein' so dumb. That Tom now, I do believe he wouldn't know bacon from sausage if some one wasn't there to point 'em out to him."

"And Sammy will never learn long division if he stays in school a thousand years," sighed Ida, as she went listlessly upstairs to change her riding skirt.

BUT when she had closed the door of the low room under the roof she called her own she seemed to forget any purpose in coming, and walking instead to the open window, let her gaze wander wistfully far over the hills to the north. She knew every mile of the road the party she had deserted were covering that morning, from the cross roads where they would swing out over the brown uplands of Altadena, through every fern-lined canyon to old San Gabriel and back again, until, late in the afternoon they stopped for tea at El Molino. Higher and higher the sun-scorched trail would wind through pungent sage and manzinito, up to the rocks under the wind-swept pines at the top. More times than she could remember, their horses neck to neck, she had galloped over it with Felipe Bandini and checked her pony beside his to look back at the Pacific thirty miles away, lying like a floor of sapphire beneath a distant sky. Sometimes it was hidden by low-hanging mists, but often through crystal layers of air they could see the surf beating the rocks at San Pedro,

and once a shadowy sail looking no larger than the curved petal of an orange blossom had drifted lazily within their vision. The plan she knew was to reach Fair Oaks in time to lunch where the sycamores were dropping their autumn gold in Judge Eaton's canyon. The judge's family were not at home and the house was closed, but his grounds, stretching back into the little rock-walled ravine with its dancing stream, were always open to every group of riders from the club. There they would dismount and rest and spread their picnic luncheon, and there,—she was sure of it,—Fanny Martindale would do her best to persuade them to drop a cherished Spanish plan for the New Year's Day procession, on which she knew Ida had been working for weeks, in favor of her own more popular idea.

Would she succeed in winning Felipe over? Or, more probably, he was already won! Ida's lips quivered, then straightened to a taut red line, while her eyes grew dark with the anger, or pain,—she could not herself have named it, —which would not be kept down longer. For from the moment at the gate when, expecting his hand to help her mount, she had raised her

eyes to behold the much-sought-after Miss Martindale smiling securely down upon her from her place beside him, Ida had fought with every weapon at command, her rising tide of resentment. There must be a reason,—it was impossible to imagine Felipe Bandini breaking his word to anyone. Yes, of course there was a reason why she need not force herself, for very pride's sake, to despise him! And yet,—she paced the room that she might think more clearly,—when a man had as much as told a girl that he cared to ride with no one else and then deliberately chose to appear before her mounted beside some other, and that without one word of explanation, how did he suppose she was to feel about it? No,—she shivered, pressing her hands against her eyes to shut out the sight of the sunny hills,—no, there was no excuse. Nothing he might have said could be plainer. Even the wisdom of such a course, for all its cruelty,—she could understand even that.

For the Bandinis, purest of the old Spanish stock yet remaining in California, still held the position and wielded the influence—when they chose to make use of it,—to which their proud old name entitled them,—that is, in so far as

these things had to do with social relations alone. When it came to associations of other kinds with the Americans, then matters were far otherwise. And the difference,—as the girl knew well—lay in the fact that the vast wealth which had been theirs under the old regime had melted away, gradually it might be,—now some quaint old casa in Los Angeles or San Diego, now a rancho in a far away valley, but as surely and as permanently as dew melts under a summer sun. No one in the Valley knew better than did Ida the story of Juan Bandini's part in the war which gave their country to the Americans. For love of that story alone she had stolen away many a Saturday afternoon from croquet parties or threatened callers and ridden over to the old mission church at San Gabriel, there to sit in the shadows of the stained yellow walls until sunset bathed them in rose, and all this for the sole purpose of hearing Father Sepulveda tell of those stirring days. And if at mention of a certain name the rose on her own cheeks deepened, the good old padre was much too wise to notice. She knew,—none better,—how, after the war was over, and especially after his death, league after league of land,

measuring for miles along the sea, had been taken from his widow, much by his own countrymen from whose ranks he had withdrawn, but more by the very Americans whom he had befriended.

Many a time, too, when school was over for the day, she had urged her pony knee deep in fragrant grasses up the daring little path that wound far above the sea along the cliffs at lonely Santa Monica, and there, seated on some jutting ledge, lingered as long as she dared, making pretense to herself that she waited to watch the sunset tint sky and sea until they hung like the irridescent halves of some giant shell on either side the black horizon line, but in reality only that, on land which had once belonged to him, she might weave again the old tales of his father around the name of Felipe.

But after all,—bitterly she acknowledged it,—dreams were but dreams, and powerless to rebuild the ruined fortunes of the Bandinis. Nothing but money could do that. And what that had to do with wealth of that sort could be offered by a girl who had to spend her days in a school-room because her own father was even poorer than they, and ill besides? It

might be true,—a hope to which she had long clung,—that both Felipe and his widowed mother, the Dona Refugio, seemed content to lay aside forever all memory of the glory that had passed and live quietly with no display nor ostentation whatsoever in the old adobe hacienda deeded to their family by Manuel Garfias when, rather than live under American rule himself he had left all to return to Mexico. Yet there was a something,—a furtive gleam that came and went and came again in the somber eyes of Dona Refugio which made the girl feel always that for the sake of restoration to him, she nevertheless craved a wealthy marriage for her son, and would somehow if the task were possible bring that wish to pass. And Fanny Martindale was rich.

No, it was only the foolish delusion of a child by which she could deceive herself any longer. Today the time had come when she must put away her dreams. And now the tears came crowding so fast that, still wrapped in the trailing riding skirt, she flung herself upon the bed and wept with that complete abandonment to grief which is one of the luxuries of youth.

SHE never knew how long she lay there listless after the tempest of feeling had passed. What did they matter, anyway,—the hours that went when, gazing drearily into the future, she could see only long years filled with loneliness and arithmetic papers and—

A low knock at the door brought her with startling abruptness back to the present.

"Yes, Hannah,—does father want me?" she called, springing to her feet and coloring, this time with shame at the thought that, in her own selfish grief, she had forgotten him.

"It is only I who desire to see you," replied a voice which was certainly not that of the faithful Hannah to judge by the startled brightness it brought to Ida's eyes. "May I come in?"

The last word had scarcely been spoken when, with a hasty, impatient movement as of one not used to waiting, the door was pushed gently open and her visitor entered,—a woman who paused just within the threshold to gaze quietly with a little smile at the girl who stared back at her in open consternation.

Yet there seemed nothing about the slender figure in its scanty gown of black or in the quiet face above to cause alarm,—nothing, unless it were her eyes. The Dona Refugio Bandini, during the long years since her husband's death, had faced many a trial and many griefs, and her drawn face with its haggard lines proved that they had not left her untouched. Not even the most partial of judges could have pronounced her any longer a beautiful woman. Only her eyes, dark, passionate, in which there lingered yet a somber fire, told why in those far off days before she became the bride of Don Juan she had been the favorite toast from San Diego to Monterey.

Instantly, with those keen eyes of hers, she noted that something was amiss and, as was her way with everyone, she made no secret of her discovery.

"You have a sorrow, Senorita?" she inquired in her sweet, uncertain English. "So? I come again then some other time, unless it is that I can help?"

Ida Ripley, conscious to deep embarrassment of her tear-stained face and with little furtive efforts to put hair and dress in order,

struggled as best she could toward composure. Dona Refugio, watching steadily, noted not only the struggle but, not displeased, the victory.

"I beg your pardon, Senora,—I am so sorry! I—something happened this morning that did hurt me very much," she had answered literally, wisely making no attempt to hide what was so obvious. "But,—" she smiled bravely, "You can help most by staying. A visit from Senora Bandini is always an honor!"

She pushed forward a chair still smiling, though somewhat tremulously, and the elder woman accepted it gravely.

"I came first to see the doctor," she explained, pushing aside the lacy folds of her mantilla, "But your good Hannah tells me he is not so well enough today to talk. Then it is I remember there is something I would speak to you about, and I return. But that can also wait," she added gently. "You look so much distress, my daughter. Much trouble have I see myself. Perhaps I help maybe truly,—if you can tell me?"

The tone, though doubtful, was so warm with sympathy that the girl's eyes brimmed again.

"Perhaps that too another time, then." The Senora, pitying her confusion, hastened to change the subject.

"The—what you say?—committee—yes? the members meet with me tonight about the—the tourn-a-ment—that word at any rate I get—the fiesta for New Year's Day, you know. It was that I come to remind to you. You will be sure to come? I have also request the Senorita—the Miss Martindale to dine with us after the young people's ride today and ask my son to bring her so that she shall meet with us too,"she added to cover Ida's silence. "The young Senorita from the East—she make the idea first to have the club,—and so I think that fitting,—is it not so?"

Possibly the Senora's dark eyes, still fixed searchingly upon her, noted as keenly the glad light that sprang at this bit of information, into the blue ones opposite as they had before been conscious of the girl's unhappiness. Possibly, too, the Senora knew as well as did Ida herself the reason for the change. But, if so, nothing of such penetration revealed itself in her tone.

"I want you particularly—" she struggled musically with the consonants,—"because it is you, so I hear the Senora Eliott say, that first plan to make it this year like the Spanish, and she tell me also all the club in favor of that plan."

Relief, nestling warm and sweet at her heart,—the knowledge that it was, after all, not Felipe but Felipe's mother whose invitation had placed Fanny beside him that morning, brought a lilt of pure joy into Ida's voice as she replied,—a note not lost, as nothing ever was lost, on Dona Refugio.

"Thank you very much, Senora,—and how very kind of you to come yourself to tell me! But—" she added more slowly, her eyes clouding again. "I don't really believe it will be necessary for me to come. You see, I'm afraid it's just the other way from—from what Mrs. Eliott has been led to believe. I do want the parade,—the fiesta,—to be Spanish. I love it so,—all that old life,—oh, you can't know how much." With a sudden yearning impulse she stretched her arms toward the older woman. "It has always seemed so beautiful,—so splendid—I've been reading all about it again in Ramona—that new book you

know. Haven't you seen it yet, Senora?"—she hastened to bring the conversation to more neutral ground, a little ashamed of the impetuous gesture. "It's been out only a few months,—a Mrs. Jackson wrote it. Mrs. Giddings sent her copy over to me last week, and I've almost finished it already. You must be sure to read it. You'd love it more than anyone else.—Yes," she continued, returning with an effort plainly evident to the subject in hand, "If the Valley Hunt really decides to keep on celebrating New Year's Day, I think it ought to be in some way that's fitting and dignified. Don't you think so too, Senora? Last year it was just fun,—games and races were perfectly all right for that once—it was the first time. But to set a precedent that that's all it's ever to be, year after year,—it seems so foolish, so beneath the dignity of Pasadena and the club too. And we could so easily make it a fiesta!"

Ida's eyes were shining now, her cheeks flushed with eagerness. In spite of the tear-stains Dona Refugio decided that she had never before realized how pretty the doctor's daughter was. What a pity, she mused wistfully, that there was not money too, for in

every other way—and she more than suspected that her son—but still, even Felipe himself realized that without additional capital soon he would be practically helpless,—and his mother set her lips in the firm line habitual to them whenever this subject came up.

"But the rest do not feel that way," the girl was adding with more than a touch of bitterness, "and so I really think, Senora, it will be better if I do not come tonight."

"You mean—" interrupted the Senora, pouncing with her usual abruptness on the real point at issue, "You mean that the Senorita Martindale does not desire it?"

Ida colored uneasily, then met the keen dark eyes with a glance as fearless and level as their own. Never should Felipe's mother hear from Dr. Ripley's daughter one word criticising another friend of his in her absence.

"Miss Martindale, as you have just said, Senora, started the club, and that surely gives her the right to have her plans for it at least considered first!"

The visitor, absently slipping the golden beads of her rosary, one by one, through her fingers, did not reply at once. She seemed lost for the moment in thought. When next she

spoke, however, it was with unexpected decision.

"She has travelled much,—the Miss Martindale,—has seen the cities of England and Europe,—Spain itself perhaps, who knows, make their preparations the most beautiful for feast days and the holy celebrations. She have already told me of some. Yet here in our little city she is content,—is it not so what I say?—to force on her club a plan for foolish games, when caballeros,—but pardon me, I mean the young men,—lean far over their saddles to pick up here and there the potato at a gallop, or run with each other the races in sacks. Ah, but it be much foolishness,—not as you say, worthy of San Pasqual." She checked herself with a pathetic little gesture,—"You see I no make real to myself yet your new Americano name—your Pasadena—though I much honor the good Dr. Eliott to put together so beautiful a word. It is always San Pasqual to me. I too remember last year, but—" she lifted disdainful shoulders—"I am like you, I did not like it either,—no, no—I most certainly did not!"

"And the real fiestas were so beautiful," added Ida dreamily, her imagination painting

again what the padre had told her of lanterns on long galleries glowing against the velvety darkness, while through heavy oaken doorways flung wide to the southern night floated a witchery of Spanish love songs. "Too beautiful to be forgotten!" she softly finished.

"Forgotten?"

Dona Refugio looked at her strangely. In the girl's tones had been real feeling, a regret too genuine and deep to hide. Indeed, she had made no attempt to hide it and for this the heart of the Senora went out to her in sudden unreasoning love. For although it might seem to all about them that she and her son lived in apparent content in their half-ruined adobe and gave no sign that there was aught amiss, yet the years had brought no keener sorrow to either than their grief that the old days had passed away,—no more passionate desire than that something of their glory might be again restored. But no one realized more clearly, too, than did the old Spanish gentlewoman how, with every year that passed, the hope of any restoration, in her own family at least, grew fainter. Their lands gone and, with them, their wealth and prestige, the old families, many of pure Castilian blood, who

had once ruled with such splendid, happy carelessness the Californias, were dropping out of sight, engulfed by the ever increasing wave of American speculators and business men. Yet, although she saw on every hand strange faces and stranger customs, in the heart of Dona Refugio the dear old days had never died. She had but to close her eyes and from beyond the sunny hills the old life came trooping back. Even yet, too, although so stiff with rheumatism that when the cold winds from the sea brought the rains in winter she could scarcely walk, still she could feel the joyous swing of the dance, Las Pollitas, could still hum the merry challenge that had swept many a silver-decked sombrero to the floor. And not alone the nights of fiesta, gay as they had been, did the Senora remember. Equally precious to recall were the long happy days in the saddle when she had galloped alone, accompanied only by an Indian servant, over the sun-drenched mesas, or where the narrow trail wound over the bluffs to Monterey above the blue Pacific. Something in the words of the girl before her,—or was it only the look in her eyes?—had brought it all back and suddenly, though neither woman could have told just

how it had come about, Dona Refugio found herself giving words to her memories to pour them out,—the glamour and the color and the wonder of the splendid old days, to this blue-eyed girl who—she was sure of it now,—also dreamed and cared.

For a long hour she revelled in this recalling of the past, the greatest pleasure left her, and her flattered audience of one would willingly have listened all day, partly for love of what she told but more because this little dark woman peering vividly forth from the folds of her black lace mantilla was the mother of Felipe Bandini. Ida had always stood in awe of her, as did most of the other young people, but today, somehow, she was different,—not quite so aloof—her black eyes not quite so piercing. Something,—she could not tell just what,—seemed to be drawing them closer together.

Dona Refugio's tale ended, as it always did, with her own wedding,—that gay and brilliant cavalcade which had swept along El Camino Real so many years ago. The little Senora sparkled all over again with the excitement of it. Never before, she made it plain, had a royal governor from Spain deigned to count

himself one among a bridal train. Yet Don Juan Baptista Alvarado himself, by far the greatest governor the Californias ever boasted, had accompanied her own party all the way to Monterey,—how clearly she could see him yet as if it had been but yesterday—yes, and given them a ball at the Presidio when they arrived. Few were the brides who could say as much! Ah,—but those had been great days—she sighed mournfully,—great days indeed, but—and now the flashing eyes grew dim with tears —they were dead long ago, over and gone forever, and she herself was an old, old woman,—she would never see them again!

It was her tears that brought them together, that drove at last all fear of her, because of her race and her rank, from the heart of the American girl. Led by an impulse she could not resist, Ida went to the bowed figure in the shabby black silk and threw her arms about it.

"But we *can* bring some of them back," she whispered softly, laying her own wet cheek against the softly wrinkled face and pressing it close. "We can and we will!"

Dona Refugio rested for a moment, as if glad of their shelter, in the warm young arms, then, pushing them gently from her, bent upon

the girl a long keen look beyond her power to comprehend. But the Senora knew. What —so it had flashed into her mind,—were a hundred thousand pesos more or less when weighed against such love and loyalty as had that morning been revealed to her? What indeed? She— yes, and Felipe too, could live happily enough without them, so love reigned in their home. Was it not, after all, happiness alone she craved for this last of her children? Yes, even as once she had craved it for her husband. The decision, however, though swift and permanent as were all her conclusions, had not been made without a struggle. For many a long year had the Senora cherished her dream of a daughter-in-law who should bring with her a dower large enough to restore, in part at least, the glory of the Bandinis. But glory was not everything, even the glory of one's own family. Love was always more. Had she not proved it so in her own life and that, too, even in that most glorious of all times in the past? That very evening she would send him for her. A smile, half of humor, half sad because of the pang such knowledge always brings a mother, touched her lips as she planned it. For how

eagerly her son would speed upon this errand she who had watched him narrowly all that summer knew only too well.

Yet the words meant for the changing of the whole life of the girl beside her were spoken as casually as though they involved nothing more important than one day's idle triumph.

"That is true,—what you say, Senorita, we can bring some of them back," she remarked as she rose to go. "And why not, then, the wedding procession itself? The white lace mantilla I did speak of just now,—my dress,—the fan,—all these things have I keep these many years. A few changes, and you can wear them easily. My son, too,—he have all his father's wedding clothes. Is it not one grand idea, then, that you and he ride together on New Year's Day to show Miss Fanny what the West can do with what it loves?"

Most truly has it been said that one touch of nature,—of downright human nature,—makes the whole world kin. The old Spanish gentlewoman and the Doctor's daughter looked into each other's eyes and laughed like two mischievous schoolgirls.

And thus it had come about that throughout the long hours previously dedicated to arith-

metic papers, Ida remained at home, basteing fresh ruffles in the sleeves of her rose-sprigged organdie,—the one gown she possessed intended for special occasions. And while she sewed there floated into her father's room haunting fragments of a song,—a plaintive little Spanish song of love which, by some strange chance, on her lips carried no sound of sadness. The Doctor, weaker and paler with every succeeding Saturday, smiled to see her happier than she had seemed to be for many a week and hoped he knew the cause, while Hannah, equally rejoiced, bustled cheerily about and baked fresh gingerbread for supper.

Nevertheless, after she had hurriedly wiped the dishes when the simple meal was finished, and dressed with almost feverish anticipation, other long hours passed bringing neither Felipe nor any word. In the scented darkness of the veranda she waited until the big clock in the hall struck ten. Then, her lips once more a straight red line, she went upstairs, and first was angry beyond all reason and then, as is the foolish way of women, lay awake and made excuses for him till, in the silver shadows of the dawn, the birds began to welcome a new day.

MEANWHILE, the Valley Hunt had proceeded on their way and after cantering gaily up the avenue reached the point where, having crossed the Fair Oaks road, it lost at once both title and dignity to degenerate into a mere sheep trail soon lost in the maze of chaparral. Here they left it, striking north along the Arroyo towards Fair Oaks itself. So far no game had been sighted, but when they had swung well out on the uplands a rabbit leaped suddenly from a clump of sage and, spreading his long ears like sails before the wind, scudded across the mesa. The dogs, barking for joy, swept past her in pursuit as Fanny Martindale rose excitedly in her stirrups.

"Come, Felipe!" she cried, "Let's keep the lead!" With a touch of the quirt to her horse, she flung him a merry glance and was off after the hounds.

The young man hesitated. He knew perfectly well that it would be only too easy for the pair of them, if so they chose, to lead the chase; for Fanny was riding a thoroughbred mare sent on from the East by her father, while his own mount was of the famous old

stock of the Bandinis. But he had also more than a suspicion that his companion could have confessed to other reasons in thus planning isolation from the others than were furnished by a scurrying rabbit. His indecision lasted, however, but a second. Then, setting his lips somewhat more firmly than was usual with him, he accepted the challenge and, a moment later, regained her side.

For a short time they held the new pace in silence until they were well beyond the rest. Then the girl, as he had half expected, suddenly pulled on her reins so sharply as almost to bring the mare to her haunches.

"Why, just look there! It's going the wrong way," she cried, pointing in affected consternation at the swerving pack. "But we'll have to let it go, I guess, or we'll never get in luncheon at Eaton's and reach El Molino in time for tea. Not a very obliging jack-rabbit, is it?" she finished laughingly.

Following her lead Felipe obediently slowed to a walk while, with a signal well known to his dogs he called them to him.

"Wonderful outfit we are,—" he remarked cynically as the pack, leaving the game to pursue his life and liberty, and possibly his happi-

ness, at a more leisurely pace, in surprise and chagrin came straggling back. "Calling off a pack in full cry for the sake of a cup of tea on Mrs. Kewen's veranda. How the English would hoot at us!"

"Oh well,—the whole thing is only for fun, anyway," responded Fanny absently.

She had indeed her own reasons for making an opportunity to talk with him alone, and was thinking how best to lead up to several points she meant, by taking advantage of it, to accomplish.

"Yes,—and it's a lot more fun for the rabbit, of course, when things don't go too far," he assented dryly.

The girl at his side darted a keen glance at him. Felipe Bandini was never an easy problem,—under the best of conditions inclined to a reserve through which only a few intimate friends ever entirely succeeded in breaking. But today, from the moment of the parting at the Doctor's gate, he had been in an unusually difficult mood. Fanny did not feel herself as yet entirely sure of the cause, but if it were what she was beginning to suspect, then the sooner she got control of the situation, the better.

"Weren't you surprised,—" she ventured finally, idly flipping her quirt meanwhile to emphasize the indifference with which she approached the topic, " Wasn't it queer how Ida Ripley backed out at the last minute this morning? I don't believe there's any meeting of the trustees today at all. Surely nobody had said anything to—?" she paused, watching him narrowly.

The young man stiffened, and into his eyes, turned hastily away, came an expression which might have warned her had she seen it.

"Something else she didn't expect came up probably," he hazarded. "Perhaps the Doctor needed her. He isn't as well as usual, you know."

But Felipe knew perfectly the real reason and had known it from the moment when, looking back as they turned away, he had seen the girl they were leaving hastily raise her hands to her eyes. From that same moment, also he had heartily wished the whole expedition over and done with. It was all right of course, he argued irritably, for his mother to invite whom she would to dine with them, and he was willing and ready within reason, to aid her in carrying out her old-fashioned ideas of

courtesy in connection with such occasions. Felipe loved the Senora. Ever since he could remember the bond between himself and his mother had been an unusually close one, increasing in intimacy, if that could be, after the death of his father and the marriages of all her other children had left them alone together. But,— and he was sure any other man would say the same,—there were times when even so dutiful a son had a right to choose his own guests, and by every saint in her calendar he swore he'd be hanged if he didn't let the Senora know how he felt about this particular dinner and its preliminaries as soon as it was over. Yet for that same mother's sake, because she had suffered much and was old, needing even now more than he could afford to spend for the comfort she deserved, he had at last made up his mind—intended perhaps that very day to—He glanced at the girl beside him, then almost as hastily withdrew his eyes. Fanny wondered uneasily at the impatient tug which for no apparent reason, he gave his horse yet, fearing her opportunity might at any moment slip from her, she continued recklessly.

"But it wasn't the Doctor this morning. I know because father called there only yesterday and he was feeling much better again. No," she finished decidedly, "Ida's put out about New Year's Day. She thinks that Spanish idea of hers is the only one worth considering and—well, the trouble is that the rest of the club really don't want it, you know. Of course," she added in a tone intended to reveal her own unprejudiced attitude, "It doesn't make a particle of difference to me how it's decided, but Ida ought to realize that it won't do any good to sulk. She wouldn't allow the youngest child in her school to behave as she did there at the gate. I certainly was surprised," she finished virtuously.

"Pardon me, Miss Martindale, but you couldn't be more mistaken!" The tone was so harsh that Fanny looked up in surprise of quite another variety. "Miss Ripley doesn't sulk. She isn't that sort."

"Oh, I'm sorry—" she broke in, realizing too late her blunder. "I didn't mean—Perhaps there won't be another tournament anyway," making all haste to change the subject. "Do you really believe they'll try a second one, Fel—Mr. Bandini?"

But the arrival at this moment of the rest of the party, quite upset, so it appeared, at the loss of their game, saved him a reply. And his companion, suddenly changing her tactics, turned deliberately away to join two other girls riding alone behind the others. For Fanny prided herself on knowing when an apportunity was over, nor would she own, even to herself, that she could be worried by so trivial a misunderstanding. There was time enough. She would have him to herself all evening. There were to be no other younger guests at his mother's—of that she was certain, and of the reason as well; it was not the first time the Senora had adroitly aided her in the marriage she was planning.

But for the present, at least, there seemed small chance to retrieve whatever loss had befallen her. The party drew together to sweep in a gay cavalcade up the broad driveway at Fair Oaks and around the house to the canyon behind. There the judge himself joined them to act as host in the absence of his family and wherever Judge Eaton was one of a group it remained, as Fanny knew well from past experience, steadfastly a group.

Some hours later, however, when after a second tingling gallop they reined in at El Molino, she had fully determined to try again, for the question as to whether she or Ida Ripley won out for New Year's Day must in the end be settled by the club.

El Molino, originally the old grist mill built for the mission at San Gabriel, but closed nobody knew how long ago, had stood for years a quaint ruin. It had been only within the past few months that the Kewens, wealthy newcomers from the East, realizing its possibilities, had by means of a few trifling additions,—a fireplace here, a balcony there, transformed it into the most picturesque winter home in the Colony. Fanny, always much sought after, had been there before, but to several in the party it was entirely new and nothing pleased the present possessors better than to show what they had done. During the tour of inspection which straightway followed, therefore, that their guests might see how cleverly the arch where the great wheel once revolved had been changed into an alcove, and other wonders, she wandered listlessly down to the pool, brimmed with callas, which lay just beneath one of the strong stone buttresses. There

was not much of romance in her nature,—among the practical Martindales there had never been time for such trivialties and Fanny was a true daughter of the house. Still more grudgingly would she have owned to the slightest taint of superstition. Yet when she had come near enough to catch the gleam of the water, a strange eagerness, half-veiled by scorn, showed for an instant in her eyes. For there was a mystery about this dark little pool lying so still among the cool white lilies. Fed by some unseen spring whose source no man, not even the Indians, had ever been able to find, it never vanished away as did even the rivers during the dry hot months of summer. No matter how long the winter rains, too, might be delayed, it was always full, and the story went that it was a haunted pool and could mirror the future of those who had faith. With far more doubt than trust, however, the girl from the East bent over it and, as she expected, saw nothing but a dim reflection of her own troubled face. She laughed. Its secrets evidently were not for her. But after all, *was* she troubled? Did she really need any help? Even supposing that Felipe was, or fancied he was—a possibility equally inconvenient—in

love with the Doctor's daughter,—what could it matter in the end? Had not his mother?—well,—with swiftly returning confidence—no girl could need any plainer intimation that her entrance into the family would be welcome than Dona Refugio had given her only the day before. She smiled triumphantly. To marry into so aristocratic an old family appealed strongly to her ambition. The Bandinis in their day had been distinguished not only in the Californias but in Spain as well, and with the wealth which she could bring who knew but that their day might come again? Yes,—it would be a real achievement. She smiled a little bitterly. Well,—it ought to be, she decided. Some compensation would surely be needed to offset several of Felipe's moods. Even so, it was worth the effort and, as a gay confusion of voices on the veranda announced that the tour of inspection was over, she banished all forebodings and ran lightly up the steps to join them.

While tea, adorned according to some forgotten Spanish recipe with the floating petals of orange blossoms, was served, the others rallied her and Felipe, to the latter's evident discomfort, on the loss of the only chance for

a run which had presented itself. It was some time before she could fix their attention on the preparations for New Year's Day.

"Don't you think," she forged her way to the subject at length, "if we do try it again, that it ought to be just fun—something like last year? You see," she continued mischievously, "you people, every one of you, are so wrapped up in your orange groves—trying to make your deserts blossom like roses—all that sort of thing, you know, and you take everything so seriously—the coyotes and grasshoppers and water rights, I mean—and all the other troubles that go with it, that you need to relax to the limit whenever a holiday does come your way. You'll all be old long before your time if you don't take care. And it was such fun last year!" She laughed reminiscently. "You should have heard everybody scream—yes, actually—when I told them at Mackinac last summer about that—that Mr.—you know—the man who keeps the store at the Corners—?"

"Williams? Barney Williams?" suggested an obliging voice.

"That's it, of course," acknowledging the aid with a gracious nod; "I'm utterly stupid

when it comes to names. Well, they almost died laughing when I told them how he looked, dressed like Ben Hur, careening around the Giddings' oatfield in a chariot! Come on," she pleaded coaxingly. "Let's go and do it all over again!"

But in spite of the gay banter in her voice, the charming little gesture of comradeship with which she ended her appeal, no one in the group now sitting in strained silence seemed ready to answer it. When the pause began to grow awkward Felipe came suddenly to the rescue—and showed her at last where he stood.

"No—I should a lot rather say, let's not!"

To Fanny his words were a bolt from the blue.

"It was fun, of course," he admitted, evading her eyes as he lazily rolled a cigarette, "but for a permanent performance—that is, if the Valley Hunt intends to get behind it, it was—well, my own opinion is that it was a bit too funny. For the credit of the club—at least it seems that way to me—if we do go in for a regular annual celebration in Pasadena it should certainly be something worth while—beautiful if we can make it so. Anyhow, it

ought to be dignified. I agree perfectly with Miss Ripley on that point. I always have."

Somewhere back in the East, like other spoiled daughters of rich men, Fanny Martindale had herself learned how to pout. It was with her an heroic means to an end never pressed into service except when all else failed. Yet more than once it had helped her win her point. As a last resort she tried it now. No further words on the subject of the Rose Tournament or any other passed between her and Felipe that afternoon, although the guests at El Molino lingered under its jasmines fully an hour longer waiting until the new moon should hang above the eucalyptus trees to light them through the canyon. The awkward silence which had fallen between them persisted even after they were mounted for the ride home. To his surprise and increasing irritation his companion at length went even so far as to make him conspicuous by obvious attempts to shake off his escort, now and again forging ahead to join some other group of riders. Yet declining, nevertheless, to quicken his own gait for the sake of keeping pace with her, Felipe rode obstinately alone, his lips set in a hard line not in the least reassuring. He had

always supposed, so he told himself angrily, that Fanny had common sense if nothing more, but if she was bent on making a fool of herself—well, he'd let her know he considered it nobody's business but her own.

It was during one such silent passage-at-arms undertaken after they entered the canyon that the climax came. Although the sun still lay upon the hills and the valley behind them was flooded with rose, dark shadows already wrapped the trail winding between high walls of rock. Near a sharp bend some distance ahead he caught sight of her horse as it swerved suddenly toward the edge of the narrow pathway.

"Careful, Miss Martindale!" he shouted. "Keep back! It's terribly steep right there!" But the mare had already slipped and lost her footing. Fanny threw him a terrified glance, tried too late to rein in, the loose stones gave way beneath and, carrying the girl with it, the horse rolled scrambling down the embankment.

It had all of it happened in an instant, and the young man knew that no one but himself had seen it, the others having passed for the moment out of sight. Throwing himself from

his saddle, he rushed to the spot, conscious only of the necessity of rescue, thinking not at all of how best it might be done. The darkness of night lay in the little ravine, yet it proved not to be as deep as he had feared, and a moment later he was kneeling beside her.

"Here, Fanny! See—I'm here! Are you hurt?"

He bent over her, cold with dread of what so easily might have happened, and noted to his intense relief that at least she was alive and conscious.

"Wait!" he cautioned her sharply as the girl, frantic with terror, tried to free herself from the horse now struggling clumsily to rise. "Lie still—*please!* If you move now she's apt to fall back on you." And he sent up a ringing call for help.

For an instant Fanny, realizing the danger, obeyed him, but a moment later, when in spite of his iron hold on the bridle, the mare lunged forward again, she lost self-control entirely and in a mad effort to save herself wrenched her foot from the stirrup. Then all he had feared happened, though not as he had foreseen. The horse, losing the precarious balance just gained, rolled heavily back on Felipe.

Some hours later, after the panic-stricken group of young people had borne the two back to El Molino, it was discovered that in spite of the faint into which she had fallen on the way, Miss Martindale had not been hurt to any serious extent. A sprained ankle and a wrist badly wrenched made up the sum of her injuries. The young doctor, hastily summoned from the village, declared that it might be some time before she could ride again, but he had smiled reassuringly as he said it.

Then he turned to Felipe.

AFTER that, during long weeks, with the irritating monotony so wearing to a woman who knows her world gone wrong and herself powerless to put it right, day after day dragged by until it seemed to Ida Ripley, trudging stolidly down to the little school house each morning, that nothing would ever happen again. That is, unless the fall housecleaning carried on as vigorously as ever by Hannah, or the

rumor of a real hotel to be built that winter on the old battle ground, or Sammy Wentworth's final victory over long division could be considered events. So far as Sammy himself was concerned, he certainly regarded his own contribution in that light—an achievement signalized by the submitting for his teacher's approval of ten problems worked out to three decimal places with such scientific exactness that not even Miss Ripley's critical eye could detect a flaw. After this triumph, however, he had rested on his laurels until teacher and pupils alike would gladly have resorted to violence to bring about his absence.

As for the Spanish wedding procession in which she and Felipe were to have played the leading roles, nothing more had ever been said about it. Probably, brooded the girl as she watched perfunctorily the rows of bent heads beyond her desk, the Senora, distracted with anxiety and the long hours of nursing, had forgotten all about it.

Yet, during one of those never-ending afternoons, behind the adobe walls of the old hacienda, a scene took place which, had she known of it, would have brought a joyous tide of color to her cheeks. On the third day of a

week of sunshine following heavy rainstorms, Felipe's couch had been pulled into the patio where, sitting propped among the pillows, he might watch the mountains piercing like purple islands through the tumbling seas of clouds. And here, at sunset, his mother went to see him brought safely in again.

"But they are much too lovely to leave just yet, Madre mia," he had pleaded. "The sun is still warm out here. Come, watch them with me for a little. You never rest at all these days."

He stretched a hand to her and the Senora, humoring his whim, sank wearily into a chair at his side. In the fading light her face looked more than usually old and drawn.

"But it does not tire me to care for you, dear Felipe," she told him gently. "It is for me more like a pleasure—only it seems so strange to see you ill and hurt."

"You *are* tired though," insisted her son. Then, with an attempt at gaiety, "But you're going to get your reward for all this devotion a lot sooner than you expect, mother o' mine. Lying here all these weeks with nothing but my sins to interest me has given me plenty of time to thresh over certain matters once more,

and I've decided that as soon as ever I get on my legs again I'm going to marry myself to enough money to put you where nothing shall ever trouble you again."

The Senora turned startled eyes upon him. Then she smiled mysteriously and, bending over him, tenderly stroked his hair.

"And nothing would please me better than to see you married, my son," she answered him gravely, "but not for money."

It was Felipe's turn to look surprised.

"But I thought—" he began, "you remember we spoke once of—about—and you said—" He floundered hopelessly.

"Yes, I know, but I've changed my mind."

"Mother!"

He was still very weak and tears came easily, yet eyes less keen than his mother's might have seen the joy behind them.

"But—but—" It was hard to make real to himself what she had just said. "You know you need so many things that—unless we do have more money—I cannot get for you. And you know, too, that I expected—am willing to—"

"Yes, I know, I know, dear son," she interrupted hastily, "but mere things alone do not

make one happy, and perhaps marriage with a girl used to wealth and extravagance, and trained in selfishness because of it, would not bring them any way. She would not be so much concerned for me, you know. Love is better always, Felipe," she continued gently. "It is your happiness I want far more than anything you could ever get for me, and when I see you married to a wife who lives for that alone—a girl who loves our people and their ways and understands—you need not worry," she assured him, her tones gathering in significance as she noted his deepening color, "I shall be more than happy then without—the things you speak of."

For an instant longer the young man stared at her incredulous, then—

"God bless you for this, my mother!" he cried with something like a sob behind the words. Again he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it reverently.

Then she had left him alone with his happiness and passed softly on to her own cell-like room where, kneeling before the figure of the Christ, still enshrined in the corner near her bed, she offered a prayer for his recovery. Once during every hour of every day since the

accident she had knelt there for this purpose, nor once allowed any other duty, no matter how pressing, to interfere with it. Such was the woman she had become. And as she slipped the shining beads through her fingers one by one it was also very like the Senora that not the least cause of the satisfaction glowing in her eyes was the knowledge that she had shifted her influence and so decided at last the marriage of her son without so much as mentioning by name either girl of whom they spoke.

But Ida knew nothing of all this, and when after weeks of waiting, rumors reached her that Felipe was almost well again and still no word for her came from Casa San Pasqual, drearily and for the last time, she sternly told herself, she laid her hopes away. Never again would she hum the little Spanish song of love, of that she was quite certain, and the Doctor, noting her silence and the listlessness with which she came and went, grew with every day that passed more silent and sad himself.

And so, toward four o'clock of a dark December afternoon came the longed-for last hour of school. Enthroned on the little square platform, her elbows propped on the desk, her eyes,

except for an occasional furtive glance in Sammy's direction, fixed absently on the clock, Ida watched the heavy pendulum tick off more deliberately than usual, if that were possible, the last ten minutes before vacation. Most of the children were watching it too, their fingers locked precisely on the edges of their desks. Five long minutes ago they had finished stacking their books in the neatest of piles and had seen to it that every scrap of crumpled paper, no matter how microscopically small, was deposited in the waste-basket. Everything was done. There was nothing for it now but to wait with bright impatient eyes roving from the clock to their teacher's face and back again.

Sammy alone still labored. At a quarter to four he had reluctantly entered upon a series of experiments to determine how many times a man might fill a bucket holding 13⅛ quarts from a well containing 1019⅜ gallons. Not that he, nor Miss Ripley, nor anyone else that he knew of cared in the least, unless, perhaps, it might be the writer of the arithmetic, who seemed never to weary of demanding answers to boresome questions of the sort. Sammy's sole interest lay in the fact that his own Christ-

mas holidays would not begin until he found out.

But try as he would, he could not make his figures match the answer given at the back of the book. It was probably wrong, he decided, but even so, he well knew how much worse a blunder it would be to say so. Chewing the end of a stubby pencil, he watched Miss Ripley with glances as furtive as her own. He was meditating on the feasibility of seeking her aid, even at this eleventh hour. By the time the big hand had crept to three minutes to four, he had summoned sufficient courage to make the attempt. He shuffled to the platform amidst suppressed chuckles from various quarters and laid his torn Arithmetic before her.

"I can't do that third one, Miss Ripley," he announced mournfully. "I've tried every denominator there is and they won't none of 'em work!"

"Is that so, Sammy? I'm very sorry," replied Ida with the same icy graciousness she had used when endowing the Valley Hunt Club with Hannah's marble cake.

Amidst the jeers of his compatriots Sammy returned to his desk, the clock struck four at

last and, so far as the rest at least were concerned, school was over for three delicious weeks. Christmas and even New Year's Day would be memories before they entered those doors again. With a parting whoop of joy they disappeared, leaving behind them the almost ghostly silence of a school room in vacation.

Compelled to remain on Sammy's account, Ida stared moodily out of the window, giving herself again to visions far from happy. Long minutes passed in a silence broken only by the scratching of Sammy's pencil and the rustling of the great live oak outside. Then, suddenly, she gave a startled exclamation.

"Sammy," she commanded him hastily, "please take your work into the cloakroom—quick!"

Even as she spoke there came a low knock at the door.

"And Sammy!—you may stay there until I call you," she added primly, rising with very pink cheeks to admit the visitor.

The man, still pale and leaning noticeably upon the crutch he carried, who stood on the step outside laughed at the look she gave him.

"Why Felipe," she cried, attempting not very successfully to make her greeting indifferently casual, "you frightened me almost like a ghost when you passed that window! You're the last person I ever expected to see again." Then as hastily repenting, "I really didn't know you were strong enough to be out yet."

But strive as she would, nothing could hide the joy in her eyes, a fact the young man instantly noted.

"I'm not—for long at a time anyway," he cheerfully agreed, "but I took a short cut through the battle field—may Mr. Raymond forgive me!—the new hotel grounds, I mean. They're going to call it the Raymond—did you know? But," he finished wickedly, "it takes the utmost tender care to keep me going these days. I ought to be invited in now at once!" And without further ado he limped past her and tossed his crutch over a desk.

"Won't have to use the plagued thing much longer," he assured her gaily. "Just two more weeks, the doctor says, and I'll be a free man on my own legs again."

"Two weeks?—before New Year's Day?—then you could—?"

The thought had rushed unbidden to her lips. In blushing confusion she checked herself. But with the words the young man had turned hastily and she read in his eyes that he understood.

"Yes I can—and I intend to," he answered her quietly. "That's what I came about. You'll ride with me on New Year's, Ida?"

The winter twilight, falling fast, had filled the room with shadows. Ida could barely make out the crack in the cloak-room door through which she felt, rather than saw, Sammy's gleeful gaze upon them. Yet, for all the friendly dusk, she could not raise her eyes again to the man who held her hands so tightly.

"Will you, Ida?—answer me!" he insisted.

"I—I promised your mother—" she faltered.

"Yes, I know—she told me. She has them—her wedding things ready. You're coming back with me to see them. But Ida, dearest, listen—I want you to promise *me*!"

Sammy, however, had escaped to liberty through the cloak-room window long before matters were sufficiently settled so that, having demurely locked its front door behind

them, they could leave the little old school house to the memory of one more public service effectively performed.

AND then at last came New Year's Day. It had followed such a downpour as can fall only in Southern California. All week long under dripping skies people had waded across racing currents of water that made every gutter look as if the mountain brooks had come to town for a visit. Yet it dawned as innocently as if nothing out of the usual had preceded—a thing of smiling blue and waving palms and lacy shadows under the pepper trees.

Such days are meant only for merry-making and Pasadena took full advantage of it. Somehow, although nobody seemed directly responsible for it, the idea of the entire village taking part in this second tournament had spread, and all the night before—lighted by reading lamps transferred temporarily from the sitting-room to the barn. and sometimes

only by dim lanterns swinging from a cross-beam, whole families had worked to cover with flowers the surrey or the hay-rick as the case might be. Even such citizens as dwelt far out on the outskirts caught the spirit of the affair and eagerly did their share. Among these were the Giddings, who had built their home so far east on Colorado Street that their nearest neighbor was out of sight. With the dawn, however, there arrived from this distant outpost a pony phaeton hidden beneath white roses, and Dr. Eliott's wife had loaned an ancient carreta, bestowed upon her husband years before, to follow after the Spanish wedding procession.

As ten o'clock, the hour set for the pageant, drew near, the excitement at Barney Williams' increased to such a degree that that worthy merchant, cutting a great slice of Star tobacco wherewith to fortify himself during the ordeal, confided to the little circle of men immediately about him that he wished he hadn't encouraged the public—at least the feminine portion of it—to watch the parade from his windows.

"Jes see 'em now, knocking a whole pyramid o' tomatoes down to get one ahead o' the

next," he declared in disgust. "And me spendin' all yesterday afternoon emptyin' crates for 'em to sit on. It beats the Dutch, it do!"

For old Mrs. Thompson, in her eagerness to occupy one of the front row of crates, had actually pushed little Mrs. Peters behind the nearest counter, whence, with blazing eyes, she was calling upon the proprietor to see justice done.

"Oh now, Barney, you mustn't take notice of sech little side issues," expostulated Hiram Peabody with a solemn wave of his pipe.

Hiram, though risen so far to no higher position in the community than to act as Judge Eaton's hired man, held, nevertheless, the most exalted views not only as to his own, but of all Pasadena futures.

"Jes' let the old ladies fight it out betwixt 'em," he counselled, "and give your attention to what's more worth it. Why—only God Almighty Himself knows what a thing like this may lead to. Ef that little huntin' club o' ourn keeps on working ez hard over makin' this parade pretty as it's done this year, it may get to be a national affair—speakin', o' course, of the parade—an' think o' the business that'd

bring ye! Sakes alive, man, ye can't never tell but what—" he drifted into rhapsody—"but what, some one o' these here New Year's Days, the crowned head o' Europe, or even the President himself may come to see it! No sir—ye can't never tell nothin' about how things o' this sort may end!"

He might have continued to bolster up Mr. Williams' dwindling patriotism at still greater length, but that a fresh crowding toward the windows drew the attention of both men.

"There goes the school teacher—there!—can't you see? My, but doesn't she look beautiful, though, with that big comb in her hair and all that lace! I never thought Ida Ripley was pretty before."

Hiram and Barney pressed forward to see.

"And the man with the serape—isn't that Phil Bandini? What you suppose they think they're doing?"

But amidst all the excitement and happiness astir in the little town, no greater measure belonged to any one than filled the heart of the Senora as she wistfully watched the quaint reflection of her own wedding procession. When Felipe, catching sight of her in Mr. Wilson's carriage, swept from his head the sil-

ver-decked sombrero which his father had worn on that greatest day of her life, she smilingly waved her hand at him and it was not until that portion of the procession had passed from view that two big tears sparkled in the eyes still so bright and dark.

"But it is good," she murmured, bravely. "We have our day—now it is theirs. He is happy, my son—and that means more to me than many American pesos."

THE END

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